

The Story of  
**MCLEAN COUNTY**  
And Its Schools

**WILLIAM B. BRIGHAM**

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MCLEAN COUNTY	
187	Anchor
111	Arrowsmith
88	Bellflower
401	Ben Funk
57	Bloomington
249	Carlock
177	Chenoa
167	Cifax
302	Croswell
125	Danvers
31	Downs
104	Edgar
269	Heyworth
197	Hudson
40	LeRoy
215	Lexington
1	McLean
247	Meadows
144	Normal
119	Saybrook
73	Shirley
68	Stanford
158	Towanda
High Schools	
510	Anchor C H S
180	Arrow-muth H S
311	Bellflower Twp H S
401	Ben Funk Consol H S
87	Bloomington H S
366	Carlisle Twp H S
330	Colfax C H S
340	Cooksville C H S
399	Crospay C H S
128	Danvers C H S
305	Downs C H S
470	Ellsworth C H S
239	Groley H S
377	Heyworth C H S
197	Hudson H S
144	LeRoy Twp H S
129	Lexington C H S
555	McLean C H S
348	Normal C H S
260	Saybrook C H S
350	Stanford C H S
158	Towanda C H S
RURAL SCHOOLS BY TOWNSHIP	
45	Allin Township
65	Brock's Grove
66	Swamp Institute
67	Brown's Grove
76	Center
76	Indiana
71	West Warlow Union
1	Anchor Township
178	Sherwood
179	Rockford
180	Mt. Zion
181	Fairview
182	Kingston
183	Sabin
188	Miller
1	Arrowsmith Township
107	Brush College
108	Columbia
109	Baker
110	Plainview
111	Samagon
113	Wells
114	Bane
115	Greenwood
1	Bellflower Township
55	Giles
56	Oman
57	Caledonia
59	Pleasant Valley
61	Center
52	Frairie Cottage
63	Victoria
64	Hall
1	Bloomington Township
79	Grassy Ridge
80	Eldorado
81	Walker
82	Price
84	Houghton
85	Sugar Point
86	Devans
86	Little Brick
89	Maple Grove
159	Lanes
160	Diamond
161	Blue Mound
162	St. Nicholas
163	Center
164	Fletcher
165	Union
166	Hopewell
168	Grandview

# Map of MCLEAN COUNTY ILLINOIS

MADE BY  
**McKNIGHT & McKNIGHT**

PUBLISHERS - PRINTERS

BLOOMINGTON

ILLINOIS

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 MILES

- County Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Incorporated Cities, Towns or Villages
- Unincorporated Places
- Elementary Schools
- Secondary Schools
- Elementary and Secondary Combined
- Steam Railways
- Electric Railways
- U. S. Highways
- State Highways
- Other Roads

Many of the roads classified as "other roads" are gravelled, but due to rapid changes no attempt has been made to classify them as such.

COPYRIGHT BY McKNIGHT & McKNIGHT, BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS

## WOODFORD COUNTY

THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN

184 1/2 185 1/2 186 1/2

CARLOCK OAK DRY GROVE

NICKEL PLATE RR

185 1/2 186 1/2 187 1/2

DANVERS

NYC RR

TO PERIN

130 1/2 131 1/2 132 1/2

NORTH BRANCH

133 1/2 134 1/2 135 1/2

136 1/2 137 1/2 138 1/2

139 1/2 140 1/2 141 1/2

142 1/2 143 1/2 144 1/2

145 1/2 146 1/2 147 1/2

148 1/2 149 1/2 150 1/2

151 1/2 152 1/2 153 1/2

154 1/2 155 1/2 156 1/2

157 1/2 158 1/2 159 1/2

160 1/2 161 1/2 162 1/2

163 1/2 164 1/2 165 1/2

166 1/2 167 1/2 168 1/2

169 1/2 170 1/2 171 1/2

172 1/2 173 1/2 174 1/2

175 1/2 176 1/2 177 1/2

178 1/2 179 1/2 180 1/2

181 1/2 182 1/2 183 1/2

184 1/2 185 1/2 186 1/2

187 1/2 188 1/2 189 1/2

190 1/2 191 1/2 192 1/2

193 1/2 194 1/2 195 1/2

196 1/2 197 1/2 198 1/2

199 1/2 200 1/2 201 1/2

202 1/2 203 1/2 204 1/2

205 1/2 206 1/2 207 1/2

208 1/2 209 1/2 210 1/2

211 1/2 212 1/2 213 1/2

214 1/2 215 1/2 216 1/2

217 1/2 218 1/2 219 1/2

220 1/2 221 1/2 222 1/2

223 1/2 224 1/2 225 1/2

226 1/2 227 1/2 228 1/2

229 1/2 230 1/2 231 1/2

232 1/2 233 1/2 234 1/2

235 1/2 236 1/2 237 1/2

238 1/2 239 1/2 240 1/2

241 1/2 242 1/2 243 1/2

244 1/2 245 1/2 246 1/2

247 1/2 248 1/2 249 1/2

250 1/2 251 1/2 252 1/2

253 1/2 254 1/2 255 1/2

256 1/2 257 1/2 258 1/2

259 1/2 260 1/2 261 1/2

262 1/2 263 1/2 264 1/2

265 1/2 266 1/2 267 1/2

268 1/2 269 1/2 270 1/2

271 1/2 272 1/2 273 1/2

274 1/2 275 1/2 276 1/2

277 1/2 278 1/2 279 1/2

280 1/2 281 1/2 282 1/2

283 1/2 284 1/2 285 1/2

286 1/2 287 1/2 288 1/2

289 1/2 290 1/2 291 1/2

292 1/2 293 1/2 294 1/2

295 1/2 296 1/2 297 1/2

298 1/2 299 1/2 300 1/2

301 1/2 302 1/2 303 1/2

304 1/2 305 1/2 306 1/2

307 1/2 308 1/2 309 1/2

310 1/2 311 1/2 312 1/2

313 1/2 314 1/2 315 1/2

316 1/2 317 1/2 318 1/2

319 1/2 320 1/2 321 1/2

322 1/2 323 1/2 324 1/2

325 1/2 326 1/2 327 1/2

328 1/2 329 1/2 330 1/2

331 1/2 332 1/2 333 1/2

334 1/2 335 1/2 336 1/2

337 1/2 338 1/2 339 1/2

340 1/2 341 1/2 342 1/2

343 1/2 344 1/2 345 1/2

346 1/2 347 1/2 348 1/2

349 1/2 350 1/2 351 1/2

352 1/2 353 1/2 354 1/2

355 1/2 356 1/2 357 1/2

358 1/2 359 1/2 360 1/2

361 1/2 362 1/2 363 1/2

364 1/2 365 1/2 366 1/2

367 1/2 368 1/2 369 1/2

370 1/2 371 1/2 372 1/2

373 1/2 374 1/2 375 1/2

376 1/2 377 1/2 378 1/2

379 1/2 380 1/2 381 1/2

382 1/2 383 1/2 384 1/2

385 1/2 386 1/2 387 1/2

388 1/2 389 1/2 390 1/2

391 1/2 392 1/2 393 1/2

394 1/2 395 1/2 396 1/2

397 1/2 398 1/2 399 1/2

400 1/2 401 1/2 402 1/2

403 1/2 404 1/2 405 1/2

406 1/2 407 1/2 408 1/2

409 1/2 410 1/2 411 1/2

412 1/2 413 1/2 414 1/2

415 1/2 416 1/2 417 1/2

418 1/2 419 1/2 420 1/2

421 1/2 422 1/2 423 1/2

424 1/2 425 1/2 426 1/2

427 1/2 428 1/2 429 1/2

430 1/2 431 1/2 432 1/2

433 1/2 434 1/2 435 1/2

436 1/2 437 1/2 438 1/2

439 1/2 440 1/2 441 1/2

442 1/2 443 1/2 444 1/2

445 1/2 446 1/2 447 1/2

448 1/2 449 1/2 450 1/2

451 1/2 452 1/2 453 1/2

454 1/2 455 1/2 456 1/2

457 1/2 458 1/2 459 1/2

460 1/2 461 1/2 462 1/2

463 1/2 464 1/2 465 1/2

466 1/2 467 1/2 468 1/2

469 1/2 470 1/2 471 1/2

472 1/2 473 1/2 474 1/2

475 1/2 476 1/2 477 1/2

478 1/2 479 1/2 480 1/2

481 1/2 482 1/2 483 1/2

484 1/2 485 1/2 486 1/2

487 1/2 488 1/2 489 1/2

490 1/2 491 1/2 492 1/2

493 1/2 494 1/2 495 1/2

496 1/2 497 1/2 498 1/2

499 1/2 500 1/2 501 1/2

502 1/2 503 1/2 504 1/2

505 1/2 506 1/2 507 1/2

508 1/2 509 1/2 510 1/2

511 1/2 512 1/2 513 1/2

514 1/2 515 1/2 516 1/2

517 1/2 518 1/2 519 1/2

519 1/2 520 1/2 521 1/2

522 1/2 523 1/2 524 1/2

525 1/2 526 1/2 527 1/2

528 1/2 529 1/2 530 1/2

531 1/2 532 1/2 533 1/2

534 1/2 535 1/2 536 1/2

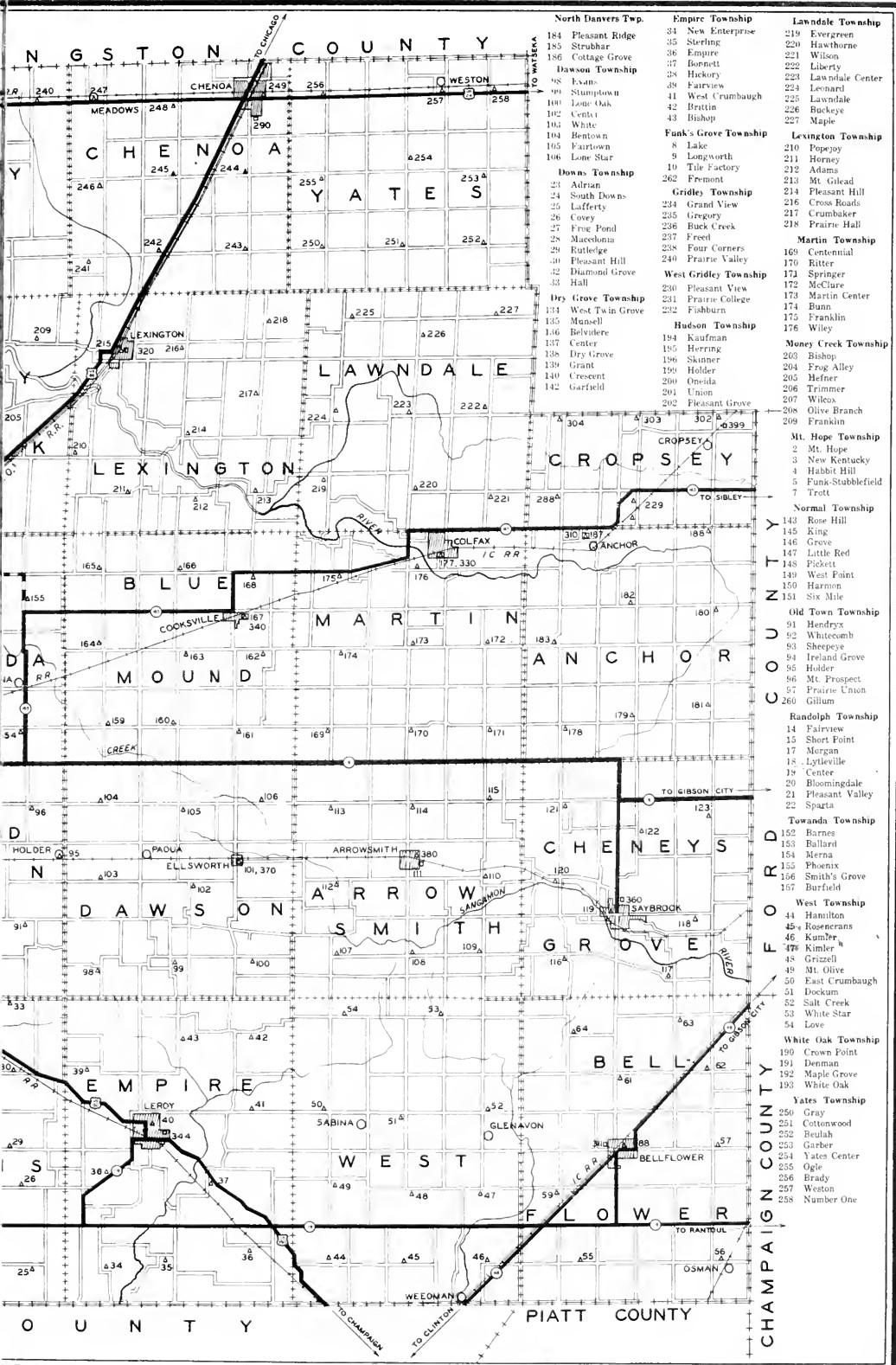
537 1/2 538 1/2 539 1/2

540 1/2 541 1/2 542 1/2

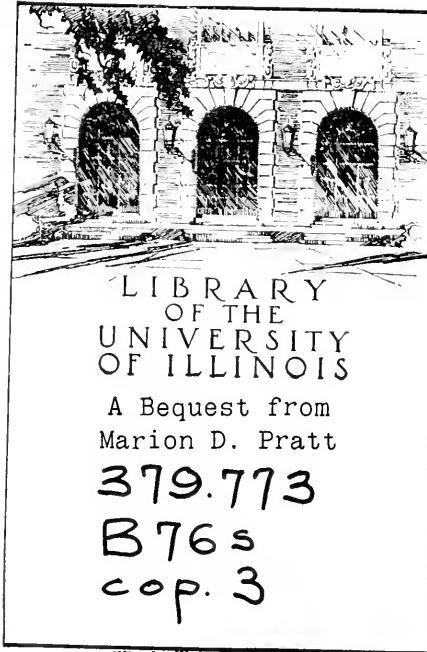
543 1/2 544 1/2 545 1/2

546 1/2 547 1/2 548 1/2

549 1/2 550 1/2 551 1/2



P  
B-A  
11  
12  
13  
40  
9  
17  
2  
15  
16  
30  
17  
1  
18  
2  
1  
11  
4  
21  
  
24  
14  
11  
5  
4  
17  
  
n  
31  
32  
31  
  
40  
  
8  
36  
39  
43  
34  
39  
12  
38  
37  
23  
37  
19  
34  
42  
35  
34  
36  
15  
15  
R  
  
P-A  
6  
66  
6  
67  
7  
26  
  
17  
17  
18  
18  
18  
18  
18  
  
Ar  
107  
108  
109  
110  
112  
113  
114  
115  
  
B  
55  
56  
57  
59  
61  
62  
63  
64  
  
14B  
75  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
  
B1  
153  
156  
161  
162  
163  
164  
167  
168  
169



ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY  
ILLINOIS HISTORY SURVEY  
LIBRARY

MCLEAN COUNTY  
AND ITS SCHOOLS

Gratefully inscribed for  
Dr Harry E. Pratt  
With admiration and  
in friendship.  
Wm B Brigham  
Aug 20, 1952.



#### THE OLD SPRING, 1932

Although many springs of McLean County have dried up, this old sulphur spring one and one-fourth miles north of the Blue Mound Hill flows on. It was here that Indians came to drink of the waters given by the Great Spirit, and hunters lingered near with bows and arrows awaiting the famishing deer. Nearby buffalo wallows showed where these large animals rolled to coat themselves with mud as protection against the blood sucking greenhead flies. Early settlers sank barrels over this spring and the overflowing water bubbled up though all neighborhood wells were dry. Now a concrete tank and trough have been placed there in recent years by the road commissioner.

The Story of  
**MCLEAN COUNTY**  
And Its Schools

**WILLIAM B. BRIGHAM**  
County Superintendent of Schools, 1927-1943  
President Emeritus,  
McLean County Historical Society

COPYRIGHT 1951 BY  
WILLIAM B. BRIGHAM,  
BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

All rights reserved. No part of this  
book may be reproduced, in any  
form, without permission in writing  
from the author.

LITHOGRAPHED IN U. S. A.

379. 555

F. M. C.

C. L. C.

To my mother, who left her little log school among the hills of Pike County to share the hardships of pioneer life in McLean County with a veteran of the Civil War. Her influence has endured and I shall never forget the—

“Beautiful home where my childhood was spent.  
Beautiful skies where the rainbow oft bent.  
Beautiful hills echoing whippoorwills song,  
Beautiful streamlets running zigzag along.”

## About The Author

In my boyhood while attending Fletcher School in Blue Mound Township, it was my privilege and pleasure to share my more abundant books and often my desk with Billie Brigham who was a younger pupil. Pleasurable were the occasions when the two of us were sent by the teacher to bring drinking water from the spring one-half mile away. During the seasons when our services were needed on the farm, schooling was second in importance.

Our friendship has remained intact through these many years, since we were both engaged in educational work. Billie continues to accomplish important tasks, such as the preparation of this volume.

WALTER DILL SCOTT,  
President Emeritus, Northwestern University

William B. Brigham was born on a farm in Blue Mound Township in 1874, son of Benajah and Elizabeth Sharer, who had settled on the prairie in 1867. He attended the rural schools, began teaching in 1894, and retired in 1943 as County Superintendent of Schools. In 1902 he married Emma C. Wissmiller. A daughter, Mildred Dodds, is a teacher living at White Plains, New York.

With a keen insight into problems facing teachers and school officers, he proved a wise counselor and friend of fair judgment to those who sought his aid.

He has supported many worthwhile projects in Bloomington and McLean County--scouting, gardening, efforts in World Wars I and II, bird house building, soil conservation, Home and Farm Bureaus, 4-H Clubs, Indian lore, local history, placing of historical markers and other work of the McLean County Historical Society, the semi-centennial and centennial celebrations of Bloomington, McLean County Centennial, school homecomings and other local celebrations.

This volume is a tribute to his ability to ferret facts and to painstakingly record them for posterity. Much knowledge was gained through his many contacts with humanity, and, he is to be commended for his searching mind, ready help, and variety of interests—all of which were evidenced by his ability to inspire teachers and pupils “to make this year better than the last”.

DANA F. ROLLINS,  
Former Member, McLean County Non-High School Board

## Preface

Data collected over a period of more than forty years is herein presented. It is the saga of the free public schools of McLean County, interwoven with stories of this great country's growth during nearly a century and a quarter. Although devoted largely to educational history of the County, the volume is not exhaustive of the subject. Enough, however, has been given to enable the reader to trace the growth and development of the school system.

Space does not permit listing names of thousands of young men and women who helped further the cause of education as teachers. Neither has mention been made of the many school officers who so ably served at a sacrifice in different capacities. Countless other persons, throughout the county have assisted in accomplishing worth-while community projects and school enterprises.

Grateful acknowledgment is given the assistance of Orlin C. Spicer, Librarian, Illinois Wesleyan University; Inez Dunn, Custodian, McLean County Historical Society; Clyde Hudelson, Head of Agriculture Department, Illinois State Normal University; Clarence Ropp, 4-H Club Leader and Farm Bureau Officer; Clara R. Brian, former McLean County Home Advisor; Thelma Van Ness Breen, Librarian, Withers Public Library; Paul V. Hudelson, United States Department of Agriculture; Ethel M. Sinclair, Daily Pantagraph; Nina Spicer, Lois Bright Brown, Elaine Wiese, typists. Through no fault of the author or of those consulted in the research, errors in names or credits may appear. The author would be grateful for assistance in eliminating these in historical records.

Glayds Lantz, who served so well as my assistant for more than ten years, has helped in the preparation of much of this manuscript.

Special acknowledgment is given Julius ("Jake") Klemm, who for years has said, "Bill, the anthology of the one-room school must be written, and you are the one to do it." His insistence and encouragement is largely responsible for this publication.

WILLIAM B. BRIGHAM

## Growth of McLean County, Bloomington and Normal

<i>Date</i>	<i>McLean County</i>	<i>Bloomington</i>	<i>Normal</i>
1834	.....	180	.....
1836	.....	450	.....
1840	6,565	.....	.....
1850	10,163	1,594	.....
1855	.....	5,000	.....
1860	28,722	7,075	847
1870	53,988	10,590	1,116
1880	60,100	17,180	2,470
1890	63,036	20,484	3,459
1900	67,843	23,286	3,795
1910	68,008	25,768	4,024
1920	70,107	28,725	5,143
1930	73,117	30,930	6,768
1940	73,930	32,868	6,983
1950	76,577	34,048	9,832

# A Study of Population by Townships

<i>TOWNSHIP</i>	<i>1950</i>	<i>1940</i>	<i>1930</i>	<i>1920</i>
Allin Township .....	965	1,037	1,006	1,115
Stanford Village .....	457	482	443	500
Anchor Township .....	642	666	763	825
Arrowsmith Township .....	801	783	907	946
Arrowsmith Village .....	316	294	297	344
Bellflower Township .....	966	1,070	1,220	1,183
Bellflower Village .....	412	425	442	441
Bloomington Township .....	2,382	2,239	2,211	2,034
Bloomington City Township.....	34,048	32,868	30,930	28,725
Blue Mound Township .....	783	919	1,025	1,053
Cooksville Village .....	256	269	324	297
Cheney Grove Township .....	1,318	1,455	1,3997	1,479
Saybrook Village .....	762	779	746	752
Chenoa Township .....	2,021	2,021	2,002	2,002
Chenoa City .....	1,441	1,401	1,325	1,311
Cropsey Township .....	421	454	500	514
Dale Township .....	779	802	906	866
Danvers Township .....	1,469	1,496	1,412	1,497
Danvers Village .....	763	705	601	616
Dawson Township .....	872	1,039	1,041	1,109
Ellsworth Village .....	200	255	261	
Downs Township .....	998	1,038	1,128	1,137
Downs Village .....	297	301	295	295
Dry Grove Township .....	758	716	812	848
Empire Township .....	2,435	2,517	2,391	2,523
LeRoy City .....	1,819	1,783	1,595	1,680
Funks Grove Township .....	587	677	796	624
Gridley Township .....	1,561	1,579	1,653	1,753
Gridley Village .....	817	745	709	720
Hudson Township .....	906	956	1,017	1,062
Hudson Village .....	339	324	330	309
Lawndale Township .....	455	554	637	685
Lexington Township .....	1,781	2,036	2,050	2,123
Lexington City .....	1,173	1,284	1,292	1,301
Martin Township .....	1,350	1,387	1,429	1,624
Colfax Village .....	824	821	803	976
Money Creek Township .....	589	631	676	716
Mount Hope Township .....	1,285	1,367	1,520	1,497
McLean Village .....	667	652	676	697
Normal Township .....	10,499	7,713	7,519	5,959
Normal Town .....	9,832	6,983	6,768	5,143
Old Town Township .....	734	763	820	774
Randolph Township .....	2,017	1,970	1,983	1,978
Heyworth Village .....	1,067	996	959	851
Towanda Township .....	955	1,094	1,134	1,123
Towanda Village .....	397	430	453	404
West Township .....	677	798	896	871
White Oak Township .....	600	627	636	655
Yates Township .....	619	658	718	807



DAWSON AND HENDRIX MARKER near Blooming Grove Christian Church.  
(Pantagraph Photo)

## Places of Historic Interest

*Arrowsmith Battlefield*, 1730.

*Bartholomew*, General Joseph, the hero of Tippecanoe, at Clarksville Cemetery

*Blooming Grove Settlement*, first in county, 1822 (marker)

*Cheney's Grove Settlement*, 1825, Saybrook (marker)

*Funk Cabin and first log school*. Funk's Grove, 1824 (markers)

*Harbord, General James G.*, birthplace, five miles south of Bloomington (marker)

*Hedding College*, old bell, Illinois Wesleyan campus

*Henline Fort* in Lawndale Township

*Hubbard, Elbert*, home at Hudson (marker)

*Kickapoo Stockaded Fort*, east of Old Town Timber (marker)

*Illinois State Normal University* campus, tower of "Old Main" and Fell Memorial Gate

*Major's Hall*, place where Lincoln made the "Lost Speech" (marker)

*Miller Park*, memorial to Civil War soldiers and souvenirs of later wars

*McBarnes, John, Memorial Building*, houses McLean County Historical Society, local soldier organizations, state headquarters of American Legion

*Money Creek Blockhouse* on old Bloomington-Chicago trail west of Lexington

*Patton Cabin*, at Pleasant Hill

*Pottawatomie Village*, west of Hudson (marker)

*Powell, Major J. W.*, memorial on Illinois Wesleyan University campus

*Stewart House* at Randolph Grove, first brick house in county, 1834, (tablet on door)

*Stone, Melville*, home at Hudson (marker)

*United Brethren Church*, site of first U. B. Church organized in Illinois, 1830, two miles north of Towanda (marker)

*Court House*; Circuit Court room with oil paintings of Vice-President Adlai Stevenson and Governor Joseph Fifer; Memorial Tablets on first floor to John McLean, General Harbord, Judge Colostin Myers, a plaque of Lincoln's Gettysburg address; a marker on east side indicates "Lincoln passed this way on Eighth Judicial Circuit"; drinking fountain memorial to soldiers of World War II, presented by Pearl Harbor Chapter of American War Mothers.

### HISTORIC HOUSES IN BLOOMINGTON-NORMAL

David Davis, Supreme Court Justice, 1000 East Jefferson Street, Bloomington  
Jesse W. Fell, home, 502 South Fell Avenue, Normal .

Joseph W. Fifer, Governor, 909 North McLean Street, Bloomington

General Hovey and son, Richard, home, 202 West Mulberry Street, Normal (marker)

Adlai E. Stevenson, Vice-President, 901 North McLean Street, Bloomington



## Contents

<b>SECTION I SETTLEMENT AND EARLY LIFE IN MCLEAN COUNTY</b>	
Physical Features .....	1
Indian Life in McLean County .....	3
The Cannon-Starks Massacre .....	7
The Prairies .....	10
Draining the Wet Prairies .....	12
Fencing in the Farms .....	13
Water Supply for the Farms .....	15
Pioneer Homes .....	17
From Homespun to Bobby Socks .....	19
<b>SECTION II TRANSPORTATION AND ITS EFFECT ON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT</b>	
From Trail to Pavement in McLean County .....	22
The Coming of the Railroads .....	27
Abandoned or "Ghost Towns" .....	30
<b>SECTION III LEADING CITIES</b>	
Bloomington .....	35
Normal .....	41
Bloomington Public Schools .....	42
Bloomington Parochial Schools .....	48
<b>SECTION IV COUNTY GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, AND SPECIAL AGENCIES</b>	
Government .....	50
County Buildings .....	51
Finances and Banking .....	53
Agricultural Development .....	55
Farm Organizations .....	56
Home Bureau .....	59
Churches .....	61
Libraries in McLean County .....	62
County Newspapers .....	63
McLean County Historical Society .....	65
Hybrid Seed Corn .....	66
The State Farm Insurance Companies .....	68
<b>SECTION V OUR COUNTY IN THE WARS</b>	
Black Hawk War .....	70
Mexican War .....	70
Civil War .....	71

*CONTENTS*

Spanish American War and The Philippine Insurrection .....	73
World War I .....	74
World War II .....	75

**SECTION VI SCHOOLS IN MCLEAN COUNTY**

County Schools .....	79
Mount Hope Township .....	85
Funks Grove Township .....	89
Randolph Township .....	94
Downs Township .....	100
Empire Township .....	104
West Township .....	110
Bellflower Township .....	115
Allin Township .....	119
Dale Township .....	123
Bloomington Township .....	126
Old Town Township .....	133
Dawson Township .....	137
Arrowsmith Township .....	142
Cheney's Grove Township .....	147
Danvers Township .....	151
Dry Grove Township .....	158
Normal Township .....	163
Towanda Township .....	168
Blue Mound Township .....	174
Martin Township .....	180
Anchor Township .....	184
White Oak Township .....	188
Hudson Township .....	192
Money Creek Township .....	196
Lexington Township .....	201
Lawndale Township .....	205
Cropsey Township .....	209
Gridley Township .....	212
Chenoa Township .....	217
Yates Township .....	222
SCHOOL OFFICIALS OF MCLEAN COUNTY .....	229

## Introduction

The century and nearly a quarter encompassing the establishment and growth of McLean County can rightly be termed one of progress. Here is the story of the County—from the days of the “red men” to the present; from untamed miles of prairie to present-day rich farmlands producing bounteous crops. An attempt has been made to recall difficulties and problems facing pioneers and how they were met and solved. Also, the picture is recorded of development of schools from early log subscription schools to “little red schools”, famed in story and song as emblems of our free public school heritage.

Here in McLean County, Illinois, various tribes of Indians lived for many years prior to the coming of the white men. Though little has been recorded of life in these early years, evidences of what were once Indian villages have been found. Likewise, findings near the village of Arrowsmith indicate that here the great battle of Etnataek was fought.

In 1822 the first white settlers came to this region and chose home sites close to streams in wooded sections. Persons who sought new horizons here were confronted with real problems from the beginning. Barren of trees except groves along streams, there were many ever-present dangers, such as rattlesnakes, wolves, prairie fires, droughts, bandits, and, yes, even the possibility of harm from unfriendly Indians. But realizing that life is a struggle, efforts were joined to overcome these dangers. Only sturdy pioneers survived hardships of living in this prairie section of Illinois.

Productive farmlands have been made of once wet prairies as tile and open ditches have drained excessive water away. Uplands which were first cleared for farming have been seriously damaged by erosion. To replace and prevent further soil loss, progressive farmers now work with the United States Department of Agriculture in planting grass waterways, building dams, planting fields on contours, and reforesting hilly lands in poorer sections.

Split rail fences of former days have been replaced by wire fencing of various types.

Once dangerous and uncertain drinking water supplies have been supplanted by driven wells, largely powered by electric pumps.

Where narrow, rough, and often impassable trails once had to be followed on foot, on horseback or in crude animal-drawn vehicles, there are today wide all weather roads on which one can speedily traverse the County in automobiles, trucks or buses, while some progressive persons use airplanes

as a means of transportation. In contrast to slow methods once used trucks and railroads carry products to and from markets.

Power-driven machinery of modern design is now speedily and efficiently employed to complete farming operations, which years ago were arduous tasks of breaking the tough prairie sod with iron-tipped wooden plows, planting, cultivating, and harvesting by hand or with crude reapers drawn by oxen or horses. Indeed, today few horses for work purposes are to be found on the farms of McLean County.

Log cabin households were obliged to furnish those things necessary for the difficult life—shelter, food, and clothing. Contrast this with today's ease in securing necessities.

Then as now, homes were the first consideration. Residents of McLean County can now boast of their pleasant farm dwellings, surrounded by trees, with well drained, productive farmlands that are adequately fenced. In addition, the County's many villages and towns afford cheerful homes and ample marketing facilities to residents.

Gardens and orchards furnish fresh vegetables and fruit to many homes during the summer months, and, in addition, food for winter is canned or stored by freezing. Fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as staples, can be purchased the year around. Contrast this with the monotonous diet of early settlers, particularly during the winter months. Instead of hunting for deer, turkey, and other game, meat is raised on farms or can easily be purchased. At a winter butchering of years ago, a year's supply of meat was prepared by curing in salt, smoking or canning. Now custom butchering has taken its place.

Growing flax and raising sheep for wool, spinning the thread, and weaving cloth were common household chores in pioneer homes. Now, ready-made clothing, supplied by wholesale firms great distances away, can be purchased at many retail stores throughout the County.

Deep thirst for knowledge led to establishment and maintenance of an excellent school system to provide youth with proper training and guidance. Adult education programs have been initiated in many communities.

Social life has progressed from visiting at church and school gatherings or mere chance meetings with one's distant neighbors to the development of organizations which work tirelessly for profitable leisure and community improvement.

Fortunate indeed is the person who claims McLean County, Illinois as his home, for here, in the heart of the Corn Belt, is a county rich in farmlands, providing desirable residences, industries, educational facilities; and offering to all who would share its blessings the truly good life.

W.M. B. BRIGHAM

# Section 1

## Settlement and Early Life in McLean County

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

McLean County is situated a little north of the center of the State of Illinois, on a direct line between Chicago and St. Louis. Woodford and Livingston counties lie to the north; Ford and Champaign Counties touch it on the east; Piatt, DeWitt and Logan Counties border on the south; and Logan, Tazewell and Woodford Counties form its western boundary. The Third Principal Meridian runs between the two western tiers of townships.

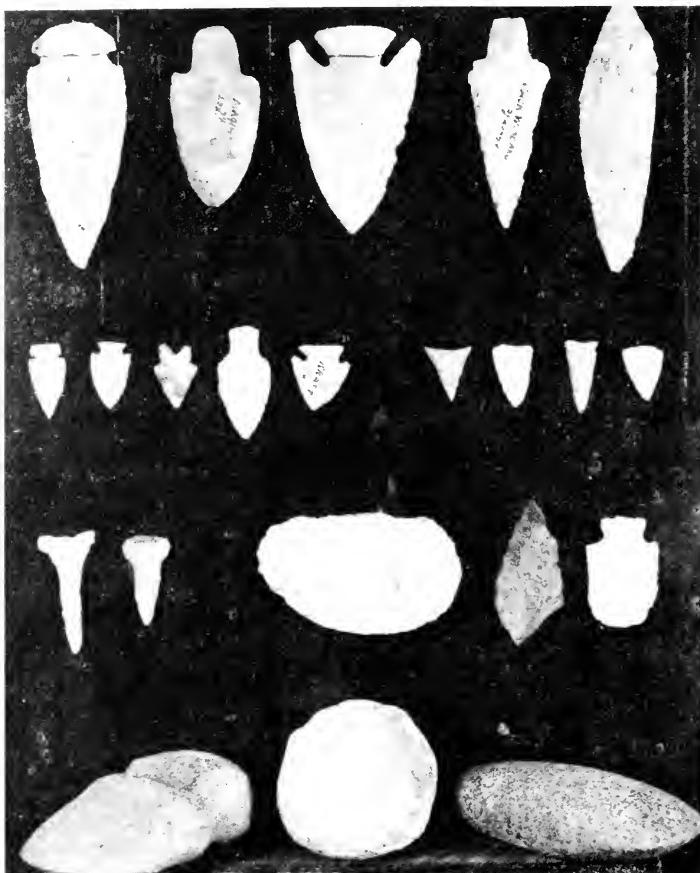
In size, McLean, with an area of 1191 square miles or about 762,240 acres, ranks as the largest county in the state.

The County when first seen by the early settlers consisted of gently rolling prairies, with groves of timberland, chiefly along the streams, the terrain becoming more hilly as it neared the larger streams.

The Bloomington Moraine enters from the northwest and turns to the east as it crosses the county south of its center. McLean is the most elevated county in Central Illinois, and from the broad moranic ridge streams flow in almost every direction. The Mackinaw River and its branches drain the northern part of the county except the northeast corner where branches of the Vermilion enter. The Sangamon River rises in this high area and flows eastward. Near the highest point of the moraine, 920 feet above sea level, a branch of Salt Creek flows southward to join the main stream. Along with Sugar Creek, the Kickapoo and Salt Creek, the entire area south of the ridge is drained. It is interesting to note that over this high ground the Illinois-Wabash Indian Trail was extended. Emigrant wagons drawn by oxen later used this route in coming to McLean County or on their way westward.

There is much excellent farming land on this moraine. However, northwest of Danvers there are hills of scenic beauty. Likewise north of Downs and in the vicinity of Saybrook are hills that add beauty to the landscape.

The climate and soil of McLean County, have made it one of the richest agricultural regions in the United States. The quality of the soil on some of its hills is poor and requires fertilizers with good farming to produce even a fair crop. Where the land is more level or low and well drained it is very pro-



TYPICAL FINDS AT INDIAN CAMPSITES (one-fifth size)

Top row: Flint blades — spear heads or knives.

Second row from top: Game points at left; war points at right.

Third row: Drills and scrapers.

Bottom row: Stone ax, hammer stone, celt.

ductive. The quality of materials in the subsoil from glacial drift is an important item. For instance, a subsoil of packed clay will not permit surplus water to soak away or allow to rise as needed in dry weather. There are different types of subsoil in the country. None are regarded as undesirable. The top soil is made up largely of wind-blown soil or loess and organic matter gathered through the years. The depth of the top soil is much thicker than in others. The depth of the top soil is a factor that adds greatly to its value. Soil maps to show the different types of soils have been prepared for those desiring to study the subject further.

## INDIAN LIFE IN MCLEAN COUNTY

The first recorded event of Indian lore in McLean County is dated 1730. It was the battle of Etnataek\*, on what is now known as the Smith farm southeast of the present village of Arrowsmith, fought between the Fox Indians and the French with Indian allies. Bitter enemies of the French, the Foxes frequently killed or captured traders sent out by France. Realizing the French would soon make war on them, the Fox Indian women and children were being moved to the east, to be left with friendly tribes during the fighting. While making this journey, the Fox Tribe dug in and rested in a small grove on the north bank of the Sangamon River in McLean County. Informed by Illinois Indian runners of the Fox location, the French and Indian allies under Captain de Villiers, St. Ange, and other commanders marched there and surrounded the Fox camp. A fierce battle began on August 17, 1730, lasted twenty-three days, and resulted in the complete defeat of the Foxes. Captain de Villiers sent his son, Colon, to Quebec with the news of the victory. (It is interesting to note that Colon de Villiers defeated George Washington at Fort Necessity twenty-four years later.)



FRANK ALDRICH of Bloomington directed a group from the Academy of Science and Boy Scouts in excavating at the Arrowsmith Battleground (called Etnataek), May 12, 1934.

\*Etnataek is the Indian name for the site of this conflict. See Bulletin 30, Part I, *Handbook of the American Indian*.

Early settlers in the neighborhood of the Smith farm noticed the strange earthworks and rifle pits. Many old, odd bullets were also found, but for many years no one was able to tell when the battle took place or to identify the participants. Historians had located the battle near Starved Rock; one set Plano, Illinois as the site, but in 1926 this author found some French manuscripts and a map which aided greatly in solving the mystery of this battlefield, and beyond a doubt, locating it in McLean County.\*\*

As to the Indian tribes that occupied this territory: Authorities claim that the Illinois Indians had lived here for many years. Prior to their occupation, possibly for hundreds of years, other tribes were here and roamed over the prairies. Some time after the defeat of the Fox Indians, the Mascoutins, a prairie dwelling branch of the Kickapoos gained control of this area in Illinois. Warlike tendencies made the Mascoutins bitter enemies of the white men, but these prairie Indians remained friendly with eastern tribes. As a result the Mascoutins (as did many other tribes) frequently crossed McLean County on the trail that ran from the northwest to the east over the Bloomington moraine on the way from the Illinois River to the Wabash.

A French record of 1752 states that the "tribes on the prairies" were building a fort near where deVilliers had defeated the Fox Indians about twenty years previously. Early settlers of this area of McLean County found ruins of this stockaded fort east of Old Town Timber, near what was known as the "Grand Kickapoo Village". Proof of human inhabitance lay in the fact that over a large area in the vicinity of the fort's ruins prairie grass had been supplanted by Kentucky blue grass. Fragments of copper kettles, broken guns, and knives were also found. Historical research reveals that the fort was built by the Prairie Kickapoos as a safe place to leave the women and children while the men were at war with the French. In later years, captives of raids in Kentucky, southern Illinois and elsewhere were held at this fort for ransom or torture. During the War of 1812, Major Zachary Taylor led an expedition against the Indians at Old Town who "fled at his approach", and in June, 1813, Colonel Bartholomew with a small army of volunteers raided this area and destroyed the fort.

At the close of the war, however, the Kickapoos returned to rebuild their village near the old fort. Chiefs and headmen of Kickapoo Tribes signed a treaty at Edwardsville, Illinois July 30, 1819. Another agreement was also signed at Fort Harrison a month later. Titles to all Indian lands in Illinois were relinquished by the Indians for which the United States Government agreed to pay annuities and to cede lands in Missouri. Tribes on the Ver-

\*\*For the complete account of this battle see *Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society*, Volume iv, 1935.

milion River near Danville, Illinois were ordered to move at once as "salt boilers" were to begin operations at saline springs in the locality, while in the McLean County area the red men were permitted to live and take game from their old hunting grounds until white settlers moved in. This restricted freedom caused Pemoatam, leader of the "Prairie Band" at Old Town, to become resentful, so with his people he prepared to leave the United States, believing that they would be happier elsewhere. Packing their belongings and shaking the blue grass seeds from their moccasins, the Indians headed for Mexico and left Old Town a deserted village.

Not all Indians shared the resentment of Pemoatam, for Indians from the Vermilion formed temporary camps in groves, on some prairie hills, and along the Mackinaw River in McLean County. Such settlements were made at Oliver's Grove, Indian Grove (both in Livingston County), and Pleasant Hill (McLean County). Three miles east of Pleasant Hill on the north side of the Mackinaw River a band of Delawares settled. In the grove west of Hudson the Pottawatomies built a village, and early settlers of Blooming Grove found a group of Kickapoos there headed by an old warrior, Machina. By throwing leaves into the air and letting them fall, Machina told the white men in Indian sign language that they must not remain after the leaves fell in the autumn. Old Machina, however, did not carry out his threats, and later became a friendly neighbor.

In ploughed fields on some McLean County hills in or near woods, arrowheads and other articles from the "Stone Age" are often found. Flint flakes and stones blackened by fire indicate that these were early Indian campsites. Students of Indian lore have made collections of these valuable finds, including many types of arrow points, spear heads, knives, scrapers, axes, celts, hammer stones, and ornaments.

Other accounts from early settlers include these Indian Stories:\*

At Blooming Grove, Thomas Orendorff, paid an Indian called Moonshine a twist of tobacco for each cut of fifteen to twenty rails. Moonshine earned nine twists of tobacco and was rich.

Among the Kickapoos were two Delaware squaws, Aunt Peggy and Aunt Nancy. It was said that Aunt Peggy was the wife of Simon Girty, the famous white renegade who joined the Indians and fought against the whites. Aunt Peggy was well-educated and a Presbyterian, but in spite of these two facts, she had the common Indian failing of drinking more whisky than was good for an elderly matron.

The Indians were always anxious to trade anything they had except labor. One settler hired the Indians to husk corn, but they would husk half a dozen ears and then stop. They had queer ideas of value, giving more for a

rooster's tail feathers than for anything else. With the feathers in his hair, leggings, moccasins, a blanket, and ears and nose ornamented with rings, the Indian considered himself well-dressed. Large, flat feet and small wiry arms indicated that the Indians was adapted to walking but not worth much for work.

In 1826 the family of Jonathan Cheney raised their first corn on the south side of the timber without any fence, while the stock was kept with the family on the north side. On the south side of the grove some Indians were camped with a hundred head of horses, and they ran and capered over the ground which Mr. Cheney had plowed and planted. He ordered them to leave, and at last told them that if they did not make themselves scarce by a certain time he would bring the white men down on them. Then he pointed a fire-brand at their wigwams in a significant manner and they left in haste.

The little Indian boys often came to see young Haines Cheney, the son of Jonathan Cheney, and taught him to use the bow and arrow. He became quite skillful and could bring down little birds out of the trees.

John Stubblefield of Funk's Grove remembers very clearly the Indians, and particularly recollects seeing the squaws dry the venison on sticks over coals of fire in order to preserve it.

Thomas Rutledge of Randolph Grove celebrated the first day of January 1829 by his marriage to Cynthia Rutledge. He obtained his license from "Makinawtown." Everybody in the grove attended the wedding, even a



CITIZENS OF LEROY AIDED THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN PLACING THIS MARKER AT SITE OF KICKAPOO INDIAN FORT, east of Old Town Timber. For diagram of Fort, see Book of Deeds No. 240, page 308. (Photo, Harry Spooner, Peoria)

number of Indians came to see how the white men managed these interesting matters.

In 1826 John Dawson moved to a location on the trail north of Old Town Timber. An Indian village was nearby toward the south. One cold winter night Mr. Dawson's cabin burned and early the next morning the old Indian chief was seen circling the spot. He then came to Mr. Dawson and said, "See no moccasin track. Indian no burn cabin". Mr. Dawson knew the Indians were not guilty, since they had always been good neighbors.

\*In 1832 an order came for all the Indians in this area to move. Although the idea was not pleasing to them, they began at once to prepare for the long journey to Kansas. Sometime before the departure, according to the account of Jeremiah Rhodes, a big dance and spree was held at the Blooming Grove as a farewell party for all the Indians in this vicinity. John Dawson came with the Indians from their village at Old Town. Twenty gallons of whiskey were provided for the occasion. The music was furnished by "Old Machina" who rattled a large gourd filled with stones, and he was assisted by another Indian with a tomtom made from a ten-gallon keg with deer skin stretched over one end. The painted dancers, numbering eight or ten, responded to the music by singing and jumping around flatfootedly. On this grand occasion one of the Indians, while drunk, struck his wife on the head with an empty bottle. (It is assumed that the "Safety Committee" immediately took charge of this unruly savage, tying him to a tree to sober him up.) When John Dawson tried to assist with the singing and dancing, they stopped him from singing, for it interfered with the music, though he was permitted to continue dancing. They all seemed to have a wonderful time, yet a tinge of sadness was noticeable. In a few days the Kickapoos would say "farewell" to the settlers and their hunting grounds and take the trail to the bleak and uninviting West.

General William Clark, the Indian superintendent at St. Louis, reported 250 Kickapoos with Chief Kannekuk, and 550 Pottawatomies who were living with them, were moved to the reservation in Kansas in October of 1832.

#### \*THE CANNON-STARKS MASSACRE, OR THE STORY OF LITTLE THENEY

In 1815 a family by the name of Cannon living in Indiana decided to come to Illinois to make their home. This family was composed of Mr. and Mrs. Cannon, three grown boys, a daughter, Keziah, who had married John Starks. Shortly before this Keziah had died leaving her only child, a five year old girl named Theney, in the care of her grandmother. After they

\**Good Old Times in McLean County 1874.*

\**Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, no. 11, p. 14, B. A. Harvey, p. 586,  
Milo Custer

started upon their journey, the Cannons crossed the Wabash at Campbell's Landing. In Illinois they built a cabin near Bonpas Creek.

One day while working in the woods the men discovered a bee-tree. Two of the boys had gone back across the river, while the other members of the family, including Mr. Starks, were investigating the tree preparatory to taking the honey. Mr. Cannon and his son had just started to chop down the bee-tree, when a band of Indians came upon them. They killed Mr. Cannon and his son and scalped them. Mrs. Cannon, Mr. Starks, and Theney were taken captive and hurried away from the scene. It was evident that the Indians expected other settlers to follow up the trail for they moved rapidly on. There was no hesitation at the streams they crossed, but they did carry the little girl across. Mr. Starks helped Mrs. Cannon, enabling her to keep up with the group, otherwise she might have been killed. After a time the Indians slowed up and traveling became easier.

A bear ran from the thicket and was shot. The party stopped while the bear was skinned and some of the meat was hung over the fire to cook. In a short time the meat was served to all. The Indians gulped it down and drank the grease. Mr. Starks found it difficult to eat the unsalted meat.

Many days passed before they finally reached the Indian village. Mrs. Cannon and Theney were not mistreated but were given a wigwam of their own. The Indians, however, did something not only uncouth but very cruel. Two scalps were tacked up near the opening of the wigwam, making it necessary for Mrs. Cannon to see the scalps of her husband and son whenever she looked in that direction. This became a constant worry to her.

Mr. Starks was soon permitted to go with parties on hunting expeditions. Later he was even allowed to go out alone, even though he was very homesick and longed to be free again. After he had been with the Indians about a year he decided to try to escape at the first opportunity. He would have attempted this sooner had it not been for the old lady and his little girl. One morning while hunting he discovered that he was some distance from the camp. He began walking faster and faster, when suddenly he came upon a band of hunters, whom he had not missed when he left the village. The Indians knew that he was trying to get away, so they took him back to the council ring and tied him to a tree. He felt certain that his fate would be the same, as had befallen others he had known. Among the Indians were some friends who thought it might be well to let him live; others were ready to operate on him at once. The argument went on for some time. Then the chief came to him and painted one side of his face black, indicating, that they were divided in their feelings of what should be done to him. They told him that this time his life would be spared. Before cutting him loose, however,

the Indians walked past him, both great and small, squaws and all. They slapped him in the face, pinched him, spat upon him. Even the little ones, not tall enough to reach his face, would jump up and strike him. This treatment was enough to cure Mr. Starks of even thinking about getting away.

Mrs. Cannon said that soon after their capture, a party of twenty or thirty Indians went to visit some of their kinsmen, living some distance north of the village. The little girl, Theney, was taken along much to the distress of Mrs. Cannon. She feared she would never see her little granddaughter again, although she never gave up looking and longing for her return. Many days passed, before a long line returning across the prairie could be seen from the hill. Mrs. Cannon became very nervous for she could only see Indians and no little girl. As they came nearer, however, she saw the chief riding on the horse in front, close behind him was little Theney riding a pony all decorated with flowers, feathers, and beads. When the Indians left, they had been afoot and carried the little girl. She had been sent home in this royal manner by the Indians they visited. The trips taken after that caused Mrs. Cannon no special anxiety, for little Theney was always brought back in the same manner. It may have been because Theney was such a pretty child with dark hair and eyes that she won the love and kindness of the Indians.

A treaty with the Kickapoos, signed in 1819, included all the tribes on the Wabash and the Vermilion, as well as the "Prairie Band" at Old Town. They were to give up all claims to the land and to release any captives they were holding to the Indian agents. Mr. Starks was taken to Fort Clark and sent by boat to St. Louis. He was indeed a sorry sight, since he had not had a hair cut or a shave in the four years he had been held captive. For clothing he was wearing a piece of greasy blanket. His friends took possession of him and bought him some clothes. With the help of a barber, he was made to look and feel much better. He continued on his way to his old home in Kentucky, later visiting McLean County.

The Indians wanted to buy little Theney for a companion to the chief's favorite son, who admired her. They stacked up a big pile of silver in front of Mrs. Cannon but she told them it would be impossible to accept their most generous offer. It had long been the custom of the Indians to sell their daughters to traders or to other Indians for the price of a horse.

We had been given the impression that Mrs. Cannon and Theney were released with Mr. Starks but such does not seem to be the case. I learned from a neighbor that they were brought back to their former neighborhood by the Indians.

In 1930 I went to Cowling, a place near the scene of that terrible happening. Stopping at a gas station, I told the attendant that I had come there

to learn more of the facts concerning the capture of the Cannons. I related some of the story to him, but he assured me that he had never heard anything like that before. A bright appearing little girl who listened to our conversation said, "Maybe old Matt Satterly might know." and she started out eagerly to find him. Matt was loafing at the grocery store and proved to be just the right man to question. "Yes, they brought Mrs. Cannon and Theney back here on ponies and traded them for blankets." He said "Little Theney's back was badly burned". This surprised me, for I could not understand why the Indians would harm the child. Matt explained how it happened. The Indians loved the child and were proud of her long hair, which they would place in a leather pouch, and pour grease into the pouch. Some of the hot grease would spill over and flow down the little girl's back. It was a crude and painful method but Theney had received possibly the first permanent wave on record.

In answer to further questions Matt told of his mother's frequent conversations with Mrs. Cannon about her experiences while she was held by the Indians. She said that she was required to knit all the time, although she had little to eat other than the entrails of wild turkeys. When she attempted to tell her captors that she was tired and ill, they insisted that she comb the scalps of her husband and son.

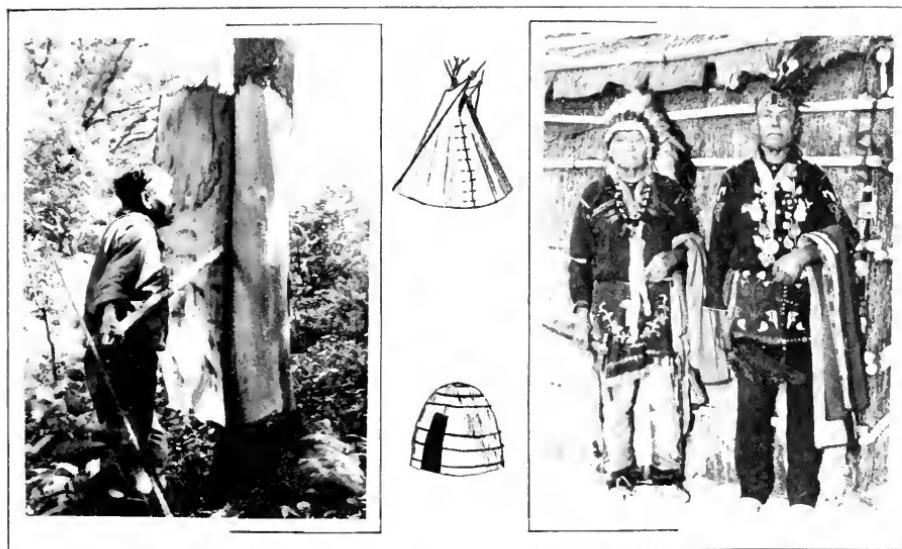
Theney remained in southern Illinois, and her granddaughter became a teacher in the public schools. She often related the story of her grandmother's experiences.

**NOTE** This is the only authentic story which has come from behind the curtain that has concealed from the outside world the many terrible happenings at Old Town.

#### THE PRAIRIES

Acres and acres of gently rolling land, covered with natural prairie grasses which grew in places from six to eight feet high met the eyes of early white settlers who came to what is now McLean County, Illinois. Under this heavy vegetation lay some of the most fertile land in the world. Only by the indomitable courage of our forefathers was it to bring forth the bountiful harvests which we now know and enjoy.

After almost a century of intensive farming, prairie grass can no longer be found here, except along some railroad right-of-way or in other places where it has been undisturbed. In addition to its great height and luxuriant growth, this vegetation baffled those who tried to bring the land under cultivation for its heavy root system required sturdy plows to which must be hitched several horses or oxen. Extreme wetness of the soil was largely responsible for the abundance of this heavy grass. This fact, coupled with the difficulty in breaking the sod, kept those who would tame the area for agricultural purposes from accomplishing much until materials and methods



TWO FOX INDIANS, JIM AND SAM, from Tam-a, Iowa, built a Wick-i-up and summer house at Rock Island State Park. This is the type of Indian home used here after buffalo skins were not available for tepees. At left, Jim removes bark from elm tree; right, Jim and Sam in tribal costume by completed house.

(Photo by John Hauber, Rock Island)

overcame these handicaps.

After autumn frost had killed the vegetation, the Indians, who sought early spring pasture to attract the buffalo, burned the dry prairie grass though some fires were started accidentally. A picture of blackened waste greeted each spring and on the upland prairie sections the grass was slow to show the green of returning life. Coarse herbage around the sloughs or swamps was first to come alive and continued to grow until it was as tall as a man on horseback. Between these two extremes of grasses was a variety of others, each found in a different grade of soil. One of the few prairie grasses that was known to propagate from seed was blue stem, a tall, rich grass favored as food by cattle.

Prior to the coming of the railroads in 1853 and subsequent settlements, large herds of cattle fed on the different types of prairie grass, with some pastures of Kentucky blue-grass which was not native to this section. Blue-grass had supplanted the upland prairie grass in the vicinity of Indian camps and along the trails.

Wild fowl found on the prairies in early days included prairie chickens, wild turkeys, and quails, all of which afforded food for early settlers. Among

the myriads of waterfowl were seasonal visits of plovers, cranes, ducks, geese, and snipes. Prior to the coming of the white men, it is known that herds of buffalo also roamed freely over this section for there were evidences such as skeletons, horns, wallows, and buffalo chips which were gathered and used as fuel by McLean County's pioneers. Deer, wolves, squirrels, and rattlesnakes, were also present in abundance though some were wont to choose part-time refuge in adjoining timber lands.

Wild flowers in endless profusion, native to this prairie section, were also enjoyed. Though some came under the heading of "weeds", there were wild roses, partridge peas, wild asters, compass plants, thistles and prairie dock on the uplands and blue flags, snake-heads and sagittaria mingled with the cat-tails and sedges in the low places.

Though the prairies have long since disappeared, an attempt has been made here to reconstruct the picture as it was those many decades ago.

#### Draining The Wet Prairies

At the time of the early settlements in this part of the state, there were many low places on the prairies without sufficient drainage. These places were swampy or covered with water most of the year. There was a system of natural waterways that worked well with flood waters; but small streams, grown up with weeds and grasses, did not remove water from ponds or where land was level. Such sections were only fit as feeding grounds for myriads of wild fowls and a habitation for frogs, crawfish, snakes, and snails.

The Swamp Land Act of 1850 gave to the State of Illinois government lands unfit for settlement. Two years later the State Legislature granted McLean County 28,793 acres of the lowest land in our county. These lands were to be reclaimed with dams and drains, but no workable plan was found. The lands were later sold.

From sales of these swamp areas, the County gave \$70,000 to secure Normal University at its present location. The remainder from the sale of these lands, \$57,716, was donated to the townships of the county for a part of their school funds. Prairie farmers in many sections of the county were able to grow crops only on hills or on sloping uplands.

The first successful implement used in drainage was a very large plow, pulled by sixteen to thirty yoke of oxen. When pulled through low ground an open ditch was made by moving the soil to each side. About 1870 use of these implements became very active in this area. In using these plows, an effort was made to follow the natural waterways. Frequently several farms were drained with one of these open ditches. However, off to the sides were small ponds or buffalo wallows and low ground that remained wet or held water all summer.

With the aid of another machine known as the mole ditcher, they hoped that most of the swampy spots would soon be producing crops. This device consisted of a long wooden beam to which was firmly bolted at right angles a knife-like steel bar. The steel bar was about four or five feet in length and seven inches wide, including the cutting edge. At the lower end of the knife-bar was the mole or shoe consisting of two pieces of steel secured by two heavy rivets through the bar. To begin operations, a hole was dug to the depth desired for the ditch. The cutting bar with the mole was then put down, and oxen were attached to a cable fastened to the wooden beam. The mole was thus drawn through the soil leaving a six inch opening to the new open ditch, which provided the outlet for water of the ponds or low ground. The cost to have mole or blind ditches made was twenty-five cents per rod. (About the same number of oxen were used as in making the big open ditches.) In some types of soil a capstan was required to pull either of these ditchers. The farmers soon realized that the blind ditches in which they had invested was not the answer to their problem. Crawfish caused the soil to cave in and obstruct the flow of water. The frogs continued to croak in the ponds and farmers were compelled to slide plows through soft spots in the fields.

Edgar M. Heafer, who was later mayor of Bloomington, began the manufacture of drain tile in 1879. Machinery for making tile was soon perfected and tile factories were established in many towns of our county. During the next fifteen years most farms were well drained. Ponds and low grounds were drained with small tile leading to the open ditches or creeks. Many of the large ditches were later closed by using tile twelve to twenty-four inches in diameter. A mistake was made at the start of this program by using very small tile. Nothing smaller than the four-inch tile was laid later. A prevalent idea at first was that tile should be flat on the under side so they would not roll out of line when covered in the ditch.

Some creeks of the county were not deep enough to give good outlets for tile lines draining large adjacent areas. Such sections were organized into Drainage Districts. Land owners in those drainage districts were thereby assessed according to benefits each would receive by having streams dredged and cleaned. This would make their farms more tillable and productive.

The system of tiling has worked wonders on the prairies, once wet and not suited for farming. These former wastelands are now our richest and best lands. Saving the soil on hills and uplands is the problem of the present day.

#### FENCING IN THE FARMS

When settlers moved into woodlands, trees were felled to start new homes. The best logs were used to build the cabins. Each settler cleared about an acre of land enclosing it with a rail fence to prevent livestock running at

large to molest his crops. As the years passed, the farmers would add to their holdings by clearing and fencing in more of the woodlands. Frequently deer and raccoons disregarded the crude rail fences and destroyed the crops so that little was left for the timber farmers.

The prairie farmers faced a different situation. Sawed lumber was available for building homes, but materials were difficult to obtain when long lines of fencing were to be built. Some farmers bought rails and others purchased the trees on a timber tract, cut and split what rails were needed to enclose the yard and farm lots. These rails were also used to erect pole sheds which were thatched with prairie grass and used as stables for the livestock.

The settler found it expensive but necessary to fence in his entire farm. Some had to mortgage their farms to accomplish this. A two rail type of fence was made by connecting the ends of the rails to the posts with a mortise. These temporary fences kept the horses and cattle on the farms and prevented roving livestock from damaging crops. Osage hedge plants were soon set on the line for a permanent fence. If the plants grew and were not destroyed by grass fires the farmer would soon have a hedge fence. Seven years after planting, the hedge was cut and trimmed to a suitable height. These hedge fences required much care and the trimming or cutting was disagreeable work because of the thorns and the brush which had to be burned.

In 1874, the barbed wire was invented and by 1880 the farmer was using it generally to fence in his land. Cattle and horses soon learned respect for such an obstacle. Pastures, lanes, and division fencing were now largely barbed wire. For gates, feed lots, and pastures to keep hogs in, six inch fence boards were used. Plain picket fences were built to keep chickens out of the garden while the more ornamental pickets were used to adorn the yard of the farm home.

For the past eighty years Osage hedge fences have added beauty to the landscape and have given shelter to birds and other small game. Some hedge rows were permitted to grow tall for the purpose of making wind breaks and posts.

Farmers did not enjoy the annual hedge trimming. However, they felt that hedge rows were occupying too much valuable land. Consequently, a campaign to dig up the hedge was started. Powerful tractors were used to pull them up, and later bulldozers began to push them out. In a few years Osage hedges will be as rare as the Osage Indians for which they were named.

The most popular fence for use at present is the woven wire with several strands of barbed wire. With this type of fencing, farms are not only completely enclosed but also cross fenced.



OLD PUBLIC WELL on Market Street Road near where King's Mill once stood.  
(Pantagraph Photo)

Laws have been enacted to cover all questions relative to the building and maintaining of division or party fences.

#### WATER SUPPLY FOR THE FARMS

Early pioneers who settled in woodlands planned to locate, if possible, near a spring or perennial stream because a supply of good drinking water has always been a necessity for man and beast. Every cabin home also had one or more rain barrels located to catch water from dripping eaves, while cisterns were later built to hold the water supply thus caught. Used mainly for washing, the rain water sometimes served as drinking water.

Among first improvements at new home sites on prairies were wells, dug from six to fifteen feet deep and lined with board curbing to prevent

soil from caving into them. Buckets fastened to poles or ropes were most often used to dip water from these wells, but later some were equipped with larger brass-bound wooden buckets which were raised from wells by ropes and pulleys.

Since they were supplied only by soil water, the wells went dry when used to any extent during dry seasons. It was then necessary to haul water from nearby springs or other wells in barrels transported on wagons.

Men engaged in the business of digging wells began making them twenty to forty feet in depth and walled them with brick. Some of these deeper wells reached water-bearing veins of sand and furnished a fair supply of water, while an auger hole made in some of the deeper ones often penetrated gravel beds with water to rush up into the wells in never-failing quantities. A machine that sunk large tile to a good depth was an improvement, but the best wells came into use when machines drilled and drove iron tubes or casings down to water-laden gravel beds. Water-bearing gravel was generally found in McLean County from forty to two hundred feet below the surface. When water did not rise high in these casings, pumping was often very hard work.



THE FIRST GRIST MILL of the County was built in Blooming Grove in 1825 by Reverend Ebenezer Rhodes. The millstones long resting on the Ames farm were recently moved to Bloomington.

Pumping water by hand was an arduous task so wooden windmills were introduced to do the job. Later all steel windmills replaced them, to be followed in turn by small gasoline engines. Most country homes of today have tubular type wells with concrete platforms and properly fitted pumps, many of which are electrically operated to force water to residences and farmyards so that pure water for all purposes is no longer a major problem.

Years ago highway commissioners were authorized by law to provide public wells and watering troughs at convenient places along well-traveled roads. It might be inadvisable to mention that dead rabbits, toads, and snakes were frequently found in these and other wells of early years, for that was only a problem of the times. Today as one drives over McLean County, these badly neglected, unused wells may yet be seen along roadsides.

Such remarkable changes in sources of drinking water supplies have taken place within the memory of this writer.

#### PIONEER HOMES

In order to appreciate the home life of the pioneers, it is important to know what comprised the home and its surroundings.

A place to live was selected in the timber so that there were logs to build the cabin home, and wood to burn in the fireplace. Here, too, the little home was sheltered from the icy blasts of winter and the scorching rays of the summer sun.

The house was usually one room with a door and a few openings for windows. Instead of glass the windows were covered with well oiled white paper which was somewhat transparent. At night shutters were closed over the windows to keep out the cold and to prevent breakins or inquisitive Indians from peering in to frighten the family. The stone fireplace was large enough to serve for heating and cooking. Often there was only a dirt floor; sometimes a puncheon floor was put in the cabins.

Only essential furniture was found in these cabin homes. Included were a few homemade chairs; a table; spinning wheels; cornhusk rugs, which also served as mats to sit upon; a cradle for the baby; and beds, with trundle beds upon which the little children slept. Lofts reached by ladders provided sleeping quarters for the older boys and girls. Dishes and silverware were limited, having been brought from overseas or handed down from one generation to the other. Curtains, if there were any, were often made of the skirts of old calico dresses. Such material also served as partitions where they were lacking. A large iron kettle, which was issued at the government post, was a necessity and was in constant use—cooking food, heating water for washing and scrubbing, or brewing a batch of soap to be used for laundry purposes as well as for the weekly bath. Lye was made by pouring water

through the wood ashes from the fireplace. All cooking utensils were used in the fireplace, either hanging on cranes over the coals or buried in them. A typical utensil was the Dutch oven, containing a whole meal of meat and vegetables, covered completely in the coals until the food was cooked. The result was a most delicious meal. Spiders and other cooking utensils hung beside the fireplace.

Often Indians living near the white settlers were tempted by the fragrance of the cooking food and would come to beg. Indian women taught the white women many things, such as how to prepare and dry venison, wild berries, and corn. Though it was not relished, venison was desirable because it could be eaten without salt, if necessary, and it was not stringy.

In addition to the trips for salt to the Illinois salt springs near Danville, the men and boys took wheat and corn to distant mills to have them ground. The return was a happy occasion for the entire family, because it often meant a new bonnet, a toy, and a bolt of bright calico.

Pioneer boys and girls enjoyed playing with Indian children. Favorite sports were hunting, fishing, and foot racing.

At the seventy-fifth anniversary of the settlement of Funk's Grove, a paper on the "Pioneer Woman" was read. Incidents in the life of Cassandra Funk were typical of home life in the early days and the way it was accepted by the women. Cassandra's dowry consisted of a cow, a bed, and a spinning wheel. She dressed plainly but neatly, was firm but kind, and was admired by all who knew her. Cassandra managed well the duties required in raising a family of nine children, and even instructed them in their early schooling until a one-room schoolhouse was built. Breakfast was started at 4 a. m. and meals were served at any and all times during the day until 9 p. m. On one occasion of special church services, Mr. Funk invited the whole quarterly meeting to his home without giving notice to Cassandra. Undismayed, she served the meal without protest.

Fortunately, there was not much illness among early settlers. Home brewed medicines and queer superstitious practices were resorted to for any and all ailments, the most common of which was "chills and fever".

Social life of the pioneers consisted of an occasional wedding or funeral and attending church services. Camp meeting, held for a few weeks each year, provided an opportunity to meet friends and exchange news from letters received. The *Christian Advocate*, the only printed paper available, was brought from Ohio and eagerly read. Long sermons were preached by the Reverend Peter Cartwright and others. Great enthusiasm was expressed by the congregation who relayed the messages to those who did not attend.

Idleness was not a trait of pioneers. They lived busy, peaceful, happy lives close to nature and to their Maker.

#### FROM HOMESPUN TO BOBBY SOCKS

Over a century ago when this county was chosen as home by its early settlers, most of their clothing was made by hand, truly home spun, woven, and sewed. Today people purchase most of their clothing ready to wear so they little realize the long hours pioneer women spent in making clothes for the entire family. This, in addition to many other home duties, was no small task.

Nearly every home had its patch of flax and flock of sheep. At first cloth was made of pure wool or pure linen until a way was discovered to combine the two into what became known as linsey-woolsey, a very durable material which was used for all kinds of clothing. Cotton was spun and woven into cloth, and sometimes it, too, was mixed with linen. Coloring or dyeing was done with walnut bark, indigo, berries, and hickory bark. Spinning wheels found a place in every girl's dowry—a large one for spinning wool and a small one for flax and cotton.

Buckskin pants or trousers worn in winter by pioneer men and boys were made from deerskin or other animal hides from which the hair was worked off by soaking them in weak lye or lime water and scraping with a knife or special tool. After the scraping process, the brain of a deer was rubbed in, the skin washed with soapsuds, and colored by smoke. Often jackets were made of the same material. These garments when worn with coonskin caps, handmade boots, and home knit woolen socks made gentlemen well enough outfitted for the coldest weather. Boots, moccasins, and shoes were usually home made since imported boots were scarce and expensive. Cobblers in these early days repaired boots and sometimes made them. Summer wear consisted of blue jeans and shirts of linen or cotton and linen mixed, while boys, and often men, went barefooted. When a boy was old enough to go the ten, or fifty miles to mill, he was considered ready for his first overcoat—a waterproof wool garment, "fulled", pressed, and colored drab or London brown. Caps of the same material as the coat were worn by the men and boys. So far as is known the first overcoat in McLean County was produced at Buckles' Grove, near what is now LeRoy.

As for women and girls, they, too, were concerned mainly with warmth of dress, for winters were cold in the drafty log cabin homes. Nearly all dresses, therefore, were lined throughout. Skirts were long and full; sleeves were long; and many undergarments were a necessity. Girls' dresses were almost exact replicas of their mothers. A "best dress" was always included in milady's wardrobe, but the supply of everyday dresses was limited. Homemade shoes

and hand knit stockings were worn the year around. Winter headgear consisted of close fitting bonnets, wool shawls, and capes, while in summer scarfs of imported lace or Paisley shawls were worn.

Clothing merchants of early days carried stocks of calico and muslin as well as many other items but readymade materials and garments had to be sold at prices that but few could afford. Most of the manufactured goods and garments came from eastern states where factories were established because of available water power. Needles, pins, buttons, and other sundry items were imported for sale, usually from Europe, while shawls and silk goods came from the Orient. As the railroads brought easier, faster, and less expensive transportation, the demand for cloth and readymade clothing became greater. Another factor in the decrease of cost to the wearer was the abolishing of salesmen who called on dealers at every "whistle stop". Wholesale markets moved inland. Most of the wholesale firms which supplied McLean County stores in early days were located in St. Louis, and later, Chicago. Today only three of St. Louis' original five large wholesale concerns are furnishing supplies to local dry goods' establishments while Chicago has none. This is due to the concentration of buying power at more distant places.

A general custom of those living away from the towns was to make large purchases twice a year of all items needed. After summer grains were harvested and sold, the farm wagon brought the family to town to be outfitted for the fall and winter seasons; and again in the spring after the corn was sold, a trip was made to purchase for the spring and summer seasons. Stores counted on these regular customers and bought accordingly from wholesale supply houses.

Dry goods establishments were among the earliest businesses in Bloomington and there were also wool carding shops. By July, 1873, Bloomington had become a center for supplies for the towns and villages round about and had three large wholesale dry goods establishments, nineteen retail dry goods stores, nine clothing stores, and twenty-six dress and cloak making establishments. So it was that the linsey-woolsey, blue jeans, and whang sewed buckskins gave way to "store bought" clothes.

During the next two decades, styles of women's clothes did not change much. People had more clothes instead of bare necessities and they were "fancied up" with trimmings. Hoop skirts had their time and place. Hoops were often cut from willows or similarly pliable materials which could be slipped out of skirts when a garment was washed. Sunbonnets, often with slats, were worn by every woman and girl, as it was considered unladylike to show effects of too much exposure to the sun's rays. Long sleeves or other pro-

tection served a similar purpose. Suits with tight fitting trousers, greatcoats, and derbies completed the attire of men during this era.

Doubtless women's wearing apparel of the "gay nineties" and the "turn of the century" was the fanciest of any time before or since. Yards of material were used with hand sewing still predominating in the best dresses. Though sewing machines were invented by Elias Howe in 1846, they were not in common use until after the Civil War and then their use was limited. Manufactured shoes and boots were easier to secure because they were made in the United States. High shoes, mostly buttoned, were worn by men, women, and children until as late as 1920.

During and following World War I, dresses followed Paris dictation and became tighter and shorter, a style which prevailed through the 1920's and resulted in what was known as the "flapper age". Hats were fashioned in cloche styles—tight fitting over-the-ear models which became popular with the advent of Irene Castle inspired bobbed hair. This freedom of women from the bunglesome dress of earlier days coincided to a certain extent with the inauguration of woman suffrage. It was no longer considered indiscreet to exhibit one's pedal extremities in public or to wear rouge and lipstick.

Hemlines have moved up and down during the past thirty years with longer, fuller skirts ushering in the "new look" following World War II. It is interesting to observe that today's babooshkas are similar to the head shawls of grandma's day; that long, full skirts, sometimes with bustles, have recaptured the fancy of today's younger generation; and that fullbacked coats have had their swing with capes, short and long, coming and going through the years. Sometimes the "new" look has been new in name only, for, if you would look through the old family album, you would see that grandma and great grandma wore some of the same styles in days long gone by.

Perhaps the greatest revolution is brought by each year's styles of swim suits, beach wear, and sun suits. Ladies in early days did not often go to the beach but if they did they were sure to keep properly covered even to stockings and shoes. Now "Old Sol" is eagerly sought during the summer to bring about the healthy tan to most of the body which many consider health giving.

Though homemade woolen hose have been supplanted by nylons which are worn for all dress occasions, school girls still cling to bobby socks or anklets. It has been a long way from the days of homespun to the present era of readymade clothes and bobby socks.

## Section II

# Transportation and Its Effect on County Development

### FROM TRAIL TO PAVEMENT IN MCLEAN COUNTY

When the early settlers drove their teams of oxen over the open prairies, they frequently came to ditches and low, marshy ground which made traveling very difficult. Indian trails running over the prairies were easily followed, except in the fording of some streams, but their trails through the woods were suited only for persons afoot or riding horseback. Such difficulties made better roads a necessity in the new settlements.



C. F. BISHOP AND ELIJAH CROSE explored Money Creek timber for traces of the Bloomington-Chicago Trail. They marvel at the mail plane roaring overhead and recall the three weeks formerly required by Mr. Crose, 92, to drive hogs to Chicago over this route.

A law of 1827 provided for laying out of roads by the County Commissioners and the appointment of a road supervisor, who could call on every able-bodied male from eighteen to fifty in the road district to give five days to cutting trees, bridging streams, and preparing the way for travel. The State Legislature in 1835 authorized the locating and making of a road from Bloomington to Chicago and one from Bloomington to Danville. Another law provided for a small road tax and permitted the person to work out his tax, although, in addition, he must work an extra day or pay seventy-five cents. In 1845 carriages meeting on the roads were required to pass to the right if possible. Some safety regulations were also adopted at that time in regard to drunken drivers and racing on the highways.

In 1858 the County came under the Township Organization Act, whereby three commissioners of highways were elected in each township. Settlers were then moving out on the prairie and trails across the open country to the nearest town were being replaced by roads running along the section lines of the newly fenced farms. These new country roads presented problems equal to those in the timber areas. The new roads frequently passed over low, marshy ground and streams of various sizes had to be crossed. To meet the situation a Road and Bridge Tax was levied and the commissioners empowered to call on all able-bodied men between the ages of twenty-one and fifty to donate two days labor each year. This system continued for many years.

Low places were filled in by using horse drawn scrapers, thus soil could be brought from higher ground or from the road sides to raise the level of the center of the road. Many culverts and bridges were also necessary. During some seasons the roads were very good, but at times they were impassable except for persons afoot or on horseback. The commissioners began to use systems of tile drainage and to do much grading; even so, the marketing of farm crops was often very difficult. In winter if the roads were not muddy they were frozen and rough with deep ruts which lingered long into the summer.

Early in the present century a man by the name of King invented a road drag. By going over the road a few times with this implement, a rough, rutty road could be left in excellent condition. Automobile owners were happy to see a bad road transformed into a good one so easily, but a heavy rain would quickly make travel very difficult. Better automobiles were built and equipped to go through mud, although they often had to be pulled out.

The commissioners kept the road drags moving and the roads were very good at times. Many farmers volunteered to drag the roads along their own farms. Lexington and Cheney's Grove Townships had gravel with which

RIW

RIE

R2E

# HISTORICAL MCLEAN COUNTY

PRESENT COUNTY BOUNDARIES—  
SHOWING GROVES, STREAMS,  
IMPORTANT ROADS, TRAILS,  
INDIAN CAMPSITES, VILLAGES,  
AND HISTORIC PLACES.  
AS OF 1835

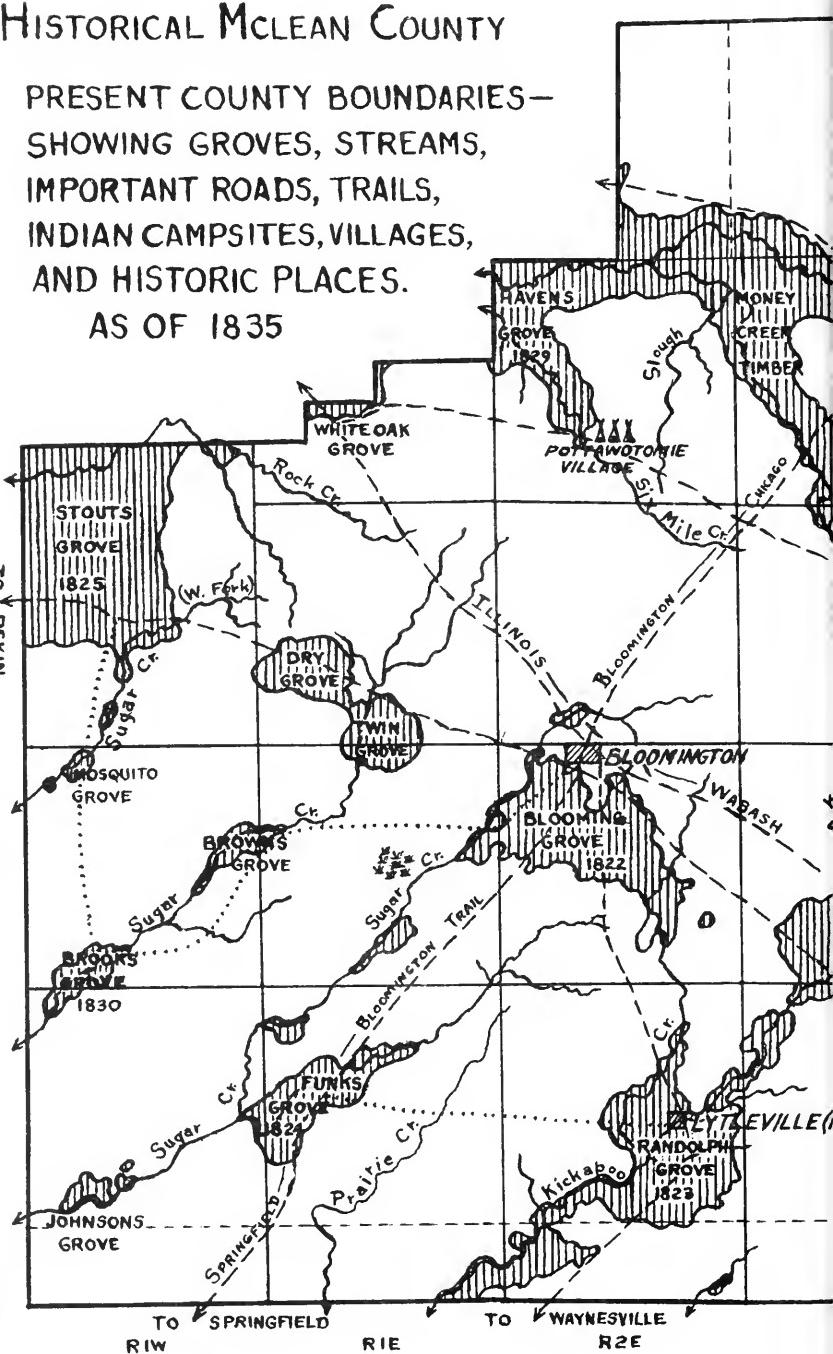
T25N

TO PEKIN

T23N

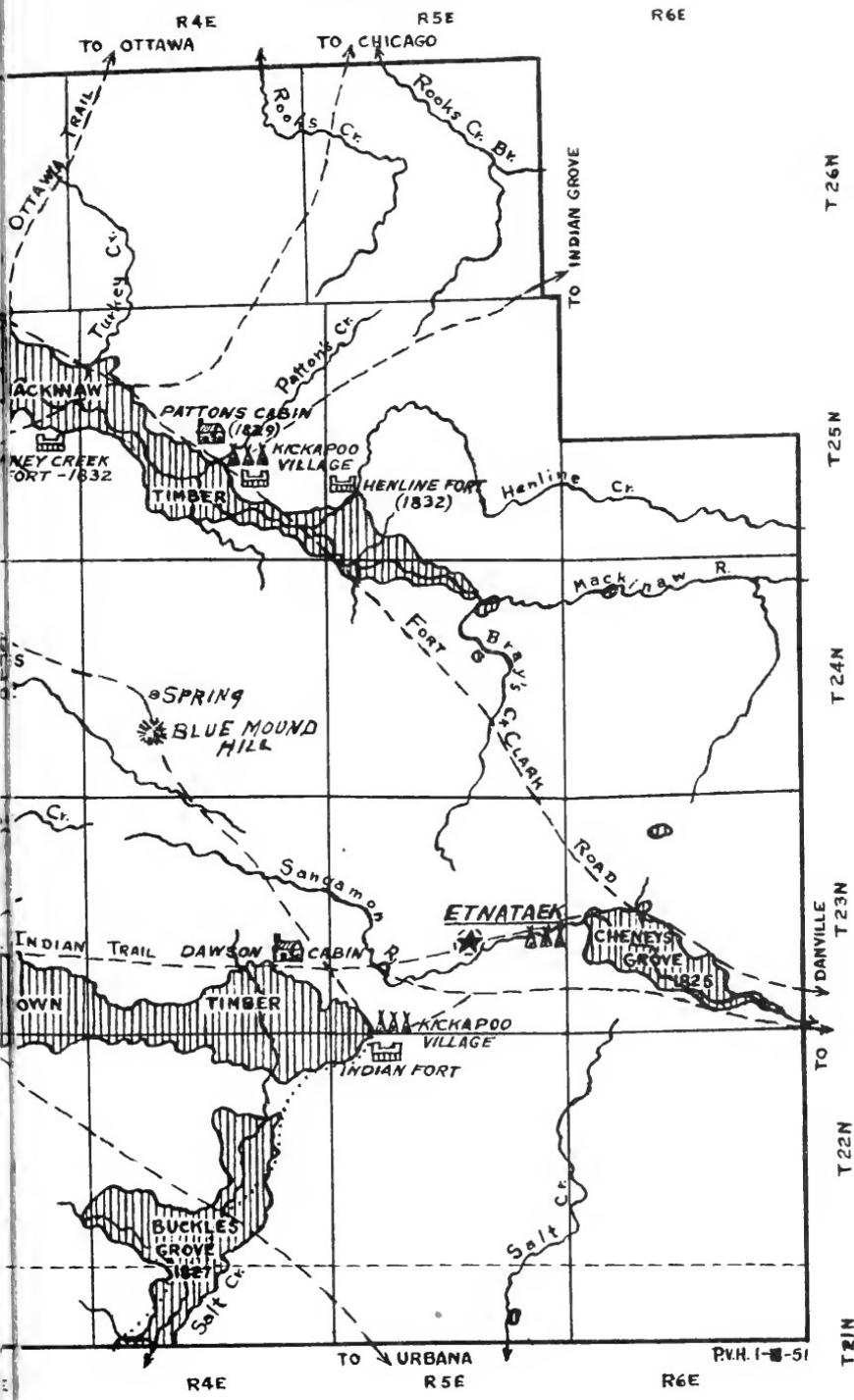
T22N

T21N



TRANSPORTATION AND ITS EFFECT

25



some of their important roads were improved. At that time the State was aiding some counties by constructing narrow strips of brick or concrete pavement. The farmers opposed a general system of hard surface roads, for they had the idea that the adjoining farms would be taxed for the entire cost of the construction, which was more than they could bear. Many groups, however, were very enthusiastic about such new roads. In 1917 the State Legislature authorized a \$60,000,000 bond issue to construct durable hard-surfaced roads upon the highways connecting the important cities of the state. The bonds were approved at the next election and the work was soon underway.



FRED J. BLUM AND WIFE, LOUISE, with driving team, 1908. He invested in an automobile the next year. Fred was active in organizing the McLean County Better Farming Association in 1914.

The road from Chicago to Bloomington was opened to traffic in 1922 and continued to the southwest the next year, at which date Bloomington and Peoria were also connected. 1924 saw the road completed across the north side of the County. Route 9 was extended to the east in 1925 and the road to Champaign was finished in 1927. Another bond issue had been approved in 1924, this time for \$100,000,000 to complete unfinished roads and provide many more hard roads to make connections with smaller towns and villages. As an aid to inter-state travel the main highways were renumbered by the Federal Government, east and west roads being assigned even numbers and those running north and south taking the odd numbers.

The road building program was considered completed in 1937. The various townships had issued bonds to gravel local roads. A good quality of gravel was in most cases found nearby. New types of cranes, trucks, and graders made possible the building and maintaining of gravel roads that now give every farm an all weather outlet to market.



TODAY'S PUBLIC SCHOOL BUSES provide adequate transportation of school pupils. State laws require regular inspection for safety and health.

(Pantagraph Photo)

In 1921 a law was enacted for the appointment of a County Superintendent of Highways who must be trained for the work and in each township one Highway Commissioner was to be elected instead of three as in the past. Under good management the roads of our County have been gravelled and some important ones were blacktopped with the help of the State Aid Funds. Local transportation is no longer the big problem. Many large school units now in existence would have been impossible in the days when we floundered in the mud.

#### THE COMING OF THE RAILROADS

Before the first railroads passed through McLean County, supplies for stores, shops, and homes were brought here in wagons drawn by oxen or teams of horses. Peoria and other river towns were supplied by boat with articles that trade demanded, but many difficulties and hardships of overland transportation prevented rapid growth of our inland towns.

In 1837 there was statewide interest in internal improvements and McLean County was interested in two of the railroads to which the State Legislature had voted credit. One of these roads was to run from Pekin to Bloomington, and the other was the "Central", extending from Galena to Cairo. It was fondly hoped that the latter would pass through our County. Work was begun on each of these roads but was delayed by a financial depression that lasted several years.

Not much was done with either of these projects before 1850, when Congress passed a law donating to the State of Illinois two and one-half million acres of public land for the use of the Illinois Central Railroad. The land was given to the state for the construction of a railroad, but the State was allowed to dictate the terms under which the road was to be chartered. It was finally decided that the Illinois Central Company which was granted the charter must annually pay into the State Treasury seven per cent of the gross receipts of this road.

Many downstate towns were greatly interested in having the new railroad come their way, which led to intense rivalry in the Legislature for the location of the road. At times agreement appeared impossible. The district, including McLean County and containing the important towns of Bloomington, Clinton, and Decatur, all of them county seats, was represented in the Senate by Ashael Gridley. Without mentioning the names of towns Mr. Gridley was successful in having the Charter designate that the railroad should pass within five miles of the northeast corner of Township 21 north, Range 1 east. This township corner is three miles west of Heyworth. The reason for the location was a mystery to many, but Mr. Gridley knew that the railroad would not come that near to Bloomington and the towns on the line to the south without passing through them.

Trains were running on the Illinois Central Railroad from LaSalle to Bloomington by May 3, 1853 and McLean County was on its way to prosperity. The railroad company had been awarded all odd numbered unoccupied sections of land for fifteen miles on each side of their right of way. These lands were immediately offered for sale; the price scaled from eight to eighteen dollars per acre, according to the distance from a station. Settlers then began to move out on the prairies to establish homes and towns.

Bloomington too began to grow rapidly. The first cars over the Alton and Sangamon Railroad reached Bloomington in October, 1853. This gave the town two good railroads with a connection to Chicago. Known through the years as the C & A, or the Chicago and Alton, Railroad, this line also had an interesting part in the development of the entire County. The road was recently purchased by the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio R. R. Company. The

Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad crossed the north side of the County in 1857.

With another financial panic and the Civil War, business and improvements slowed down for the next ten years. In 1867 the Jacksonville Branch of the Chicago and Alton was completed. The Big Four line from Pekin through Bloomington and LeRoy which had been started in 1837 under another name was completed in 1870. The subscription granted to this line from Bloomington Township was \$100,000, from Empire Township \$75,000, and from West Township \$20,000.

The Lake Erie and Western Railroad was extended from the east to Bloomington in 1872, and completed to Peoria in 1887. Townships along the line had made generous subscriptions. For example, Bellflower Township donated \$25,000 in order to have the road bend a mile and a half to the south and to furnish a more accessible market. The subscribers, however, were surprised to see the Clinton Branch of the Illinois Central come across their township before the L. E. & W. R.R. was in operation.

A narrow gauge railroad was extended from Rantoul to LeRoy in 1879. This road, nicknamed the "Pumpkin Vine", was later bought by the Illinois Central Company and rebuilt to use cars of regular width. The Kankakee Branch of the Illinois Central was in operation to Bloomington by 1882. Towns or side tracks were established at convenient intervals along all railroads of the County.

Railroading has undergone many changes since early days when wood-burning engines pulled small flat cars and flimsy box cars over light iron rails. It was not until the 1870s that coal was available here for fuel. When the work train used in building the Kankakee Branch Line backed into Anchor Township in 1880, the ties for the rails were laid where the ground was level with some grading to fill in low places and some cutting down of hills. Later gravel was obtained to ballast the roadbed for safer travel. At that time cars were connected with the link and pin system, and brakemen sometimes lost fingers when coupling. Trains were slowed with hand-braking, which was very dangerous work when the trains were coated with ice or snow. The automatic coupler and air brakes introduced in the 1890s and the electric headlight which came later contributed greatly to safety in railroading. Today the high-powered Diesel locomotive drawing heavy trains is a far cry from the early wood-burning engine with its few dangling cars.

*Electric Railways:* Owing to great improvements in electric engines or motors, interurban railroads were being constructed as early as 1900. The electric power for these roads was generated at a central station and carried

on a trolley line to the trolley of the car which connected with the motor. This method gave the cars plenty of speed, easy starting, and good control.

A company headed by W. B. McKinley under the legal name of the Illinois Traction System built these electric railways between many of the larger cities in Illinois. One of these roads connected Decatur and Bloomington in 1906. It was continued to Peoria the next year.

The interurban cars, running every hour, carried many passengers and made stops at crossroads and stations along the way, handling local freight, including milk. Some cars also carried the mail, and freight cars handled grain at sidings where elevators had been built. These electric railways have been helpful to the areas through which they run. However, the competition of numerous automobiles, buses, and trucks has discouraged further construction of interurban electric railroads.

#### ABANDONED OR "GHOST TOWNS"

In some of the western states are dead mining towns where today sagebrush grows in the streets and the empty houses are badly dilapidated. These are referred to as "ghost towns". McLean County has its ghost towns, too. Once flourishing villages have completely vanished. Though they were located on well beaten trails, railroads built nearby left them to one side and caused them to decline.

*Lytleville:* Lytleville consisted of eighty-five lots near the center of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 23 in Randolph Township (Record D, pp. 5-6). Though it was laid out in 1836 by John Baldwin, a saw mill had been established on the Kickapoo before 1830. Later a grist mill was added for there was water enough in the creek to furnish power the year around. These mills furnished large quantities of sawed lumber and flour to the new town of Bloomington to the north. The Bloomington-Waynesville County Road was extended southeast at Randolph to pass through Lytleville but the Illinois Central Railroad came southeast at Randolph to pass through Lytleville but the Illinois Central Railroad came through about a mile to the west. Heyworth was established on the railroad and "Lytleville in the valley" was doomed to share the fate of other forgotten towns. There are but few traces of the once prosperous village. (See Lytleville School, No. 18)

*Mount Hope* was laid out June 16, 1837 by William Peck, agent for the Farmers' and Mechanics' Emigrating Society. One hundred twenty lots and twenty outlots, or undivided blocks, on part of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 4 in Mt. Hope Township, as well as 24,000 acres were contracted for as part of the Mount Hope Colony scheme. Each stockholder was to receive three hundred twenty acres of land and four lots in the village. A group of settlers came from Rhode Island in 1837, but the panic of that year and the difficulties of

farming on the prairie discouraged many from coming west. Some who did make the trip returned to their former homes while others went farther west. The few sturdy families who remained in the community built several houses and a church in the village. Soon after the Chicago and Alton Railroad came through to the east, McLean was established, and the village of Mount Hope was soon vacated. A quarter section of farm land around which are roads and the abandoned cemetery near the southwest corner are reminders of a worthy project that failed. (See Mount Hope School, No. 2 and Mount Hope Township)

*Clarksville:* General Joseph Bartholomew, the hero of Tippecanoe and other Indian wars, and his brother, Marston, laid out the town of Clarksville in Money Creek Township. Located on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3, the village at one time included several stores; blacksmith, wagon, tailor, and shoe shops; a hotel; a wool carding mill; a saloon; and twenty or thirty dwellings for the three hundred residents. Through it passed the Fort Clark Road to Peoria, but as the Chicago and Alton Railroad was located to the east through Lexington, Clarksville began to decline. Today a rural church marks the site of this "ghost town" while in the little cemetery to the northwest General Bartholomew lies buried. (See Olive Branch School, No. 208.)

*Bowling Green and Versailles:* Before Woodford County was organized in 1841, the territory in which Bowling Green and Versailles were located was a part of McLean County.

Bowling Green was five miles northwest of Oak Grove where the trail road crossed Panther Creek. Four miles farther to the northwest was Versailles. Both towns were platted in 1836 and soon housed several general stores, small shops, and taverns. At Bowling Green there were saw and grist mills, powered by Panther Creek, and a distillery did a rushing business. It was not long until doctors and other professional men moved in. Versailles also flourished and engaged with Bowling Green in a heated contest for county seat of Woodford County when it was organized in 1841, with Versailles coming out the winner. After serving two years as county seat, Metamora was then chosen as site of the court house where Abraham Lincoln later attended court. On his way to court he passed through Bowling Green and was known to have made several speeches there. Both towns ceased to exist soon after the Illinois Central built its line a few miles to the east.

*Pleasant Hill:* Isaac Smalley laid out the town of Pleasant Hill, consisting of forty-four lots in part of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 21, Lexington Township (Book G, p. 463), with an addition of forty-eight lots added in 1852. The town was so named because of the beautiful natural setting.

John Patton, the first settler in the vicinity, had moved into a Kickapoo

Indian wigwam in 1829. Smalley was a man of remarkable energy and through it he built up the best town in northern McLean County. However, his efforts to have a railroad come through Pleasant Hill were not successful. Instead the Chicago and Alton Railroad went through Lexington, on a direct line with Pontiac and at a better place to cross the Mackinaw River.

Pleasant Hill and Oneida, one and one-half miles north of Hudson (See Oneida School, No. 200 and Union School, No. 201), were dealt their death blows when the Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad decided to locate its line across the north end of McLean County because of a better route to Peoria and there was no large bridge to build as they would have had to do if it had passed through Pleasant Hill and Oneida.

In its best days Pleasant Hill had three or four stores doing a rushing business, three churches, as many blacksmith shops, cabinet shops, two or more physicians, a female seminary with seventeen rooms, a two-teacher school, and a saw mill. After 1860 the town began to decline, followed later by a general exodus. The postoffice (Selma) was removed. Today very little remains other than the cemetery. (See Pleasant Hill School, No. 214)

*Oak Grove:* At a beautiful site on the old Peoria trail, the village of Oak Grove was laid out in 1879, on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 28 in White Oak Township (Plat Book 2, p. 410). A wagon shop and store were started here about 1850 but the town experienced its greatest growth in the decade between 1878 and 1888. Two general stores, one drug store, a postoffice, blacksmith shop, cabinet shop, a mill, a harness shop, a large public hall, and about twenty dwellings made up the town at this time. The postoffice and about half the dwellings were moved to the new town of Carlock in the summer of 1888 when the railroad came through there. Only one or two of the former residences are all that is left of the once prosperous hamlet. (See Carlock Grade School, No. 189)

*Wilkesborough:* Ninety-six lots and a public square were included in the original town of Wilkesborough, laid out by J. O. Barnard in 1836, with an addition of ninety-six lots platted the following year. Since it was on the State road to Pekin, many emigrants passed through it. A few houses, stores, and shops were built and for a time the prospects for a town appeared good. Concord, now Danvers, one mile to the west, began to grow and Wilkesborough became another town that failed to develop as planned. A tumble-down brick building with a hall on the second floor was the last remains of a town that might have been.

*King's Mill*, located on Sugar Creek, three miles east of Wilkesborough, was a busy place with a grist mill, wagon shop, and a store, but when the railroad came through, the waterpowered mill was no longer needed. King's

Mill was abandoned. Today only an old public well marks the site of this once interesting village on the Market Street Road. (See Dry Grove Township.)

*Potosi:* A young Dr. Green established a postoffice and drug store in 1866 at the crossroads on the McLean-Livingston County line, two and one-half miles west of Cropsey, with the name, Potosi, being given it by the Post-office Department. This business soon developed into a general store, with J. E. Whitney's blacksmith shop just to the south and the Masonic Hall above it. A shoe shop and several residences were also located at Potosi. H. J. Barnes carried the tri-weekly mail from Fairbury and continued south to Bellflower over a county road on the section line. He made stops at Garda, south of the iron bridge over the Mackinaw; at Dart, about four miles farther on; at Saybrook; and in Bellflower Township. The road through Potosi was very important in the settlement of the eastern part of McLean County since it furnished an outlet for farm products and was used to bring supplies to the settlements. The Belle Prairie Agricultural Society promoted an annual fair for many years on the grounds of the D. S. Crum farm to the north of Potosi. Here, too, was an excellent community center, even though a political gathering at one time almost ended in a riot. This lively little town no longer exists but the rural school nearby bore its name for many years. (see Potosi School, No. 303)

*Stumptown:* About 1860 an important settlement was started on the north edge of Old Town Timber, in Section 33, Dawson Township. The Pekin-Bloomington-Danville state road, followed the old Indian trail about a mile to the north. The new town grew rapidly. Alpheus Webber and John Campbell opened general stores; David Frankenberger had a wagon shop; David Hitch operated a plow factory; and there were also a steam mill, pump factory, and shoe shop. A Methodist Church was built in 1869. Mail delivered by stage or courier to Padua, the postoffice on the Trail, was taken to the Webber store in Stumptown for distribution. The prosperous little Stumptown began to decline before the trains began running on the railroad to the north. Mr. Webber moved his store to the new site of Padua and later to Arrowsmith. Mr. Hitch went to Bloomington and started a woolen mill. Dr. Skaggs moved to Ellsworth, and in a few years, the only church and the lone store remained. The village has now passed out of the picture. (See Stumptown School, No. 99)

*Benjaminville* was started in 1855 by John R. Benjamin. A store was erected at the northwest corner of Section 7 in Dawson Township. Members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) were invited by Mr. Benjamin and settled in the vicinity, where they established a church. Two other churches

were built and several shops opened there making a pleasant village. The Lake Erie and Western Railroad had been expected to come through Benjaminville but instead it passed a mile and a half to the south, where later Holder came into being. (See Bentown School, No. 104)

## Section III

# Leading Cities

### BLOOMINGTON

Bloomington was named before it had human habitation and was designated on paper as county seat of McLean County, Illinois in 1830 when a petition for the formation of the county was filed at Vandalia, then state capital. The name was perhaps chosen as an adaptation of the county's earliest settlement, Blooming Grove. The "deep snow" during the winter of 1830 prevented sale of its first lots, however, until July 4, 1831. Known prices of the lots at that time ranged from \$5 to \$50. The original plat of the village may be seen at the county court house on the first page of the book of deed records.

In 1843, legal incorporation of the Town of Bloomington was effected, with the State Legislature granting a special charter to the City of Bloomington in 1850.

Destined in later years to be the county seat of the wealthiest agricultural county in the United States, if not the world, early accounts of Bloomington's history state that farming on the prairie was hardly thought of by early settlers, though the raising of livestock was extensively on, almost without profit. Ten years after its organization, the village contained not over six or eight stores "with less business in proportion to merchants", and was described as a "pleasant residence, capital of a fine county, and possessing good trade with the surrounding country".

In 1851, the city contained a population of 1611 but the advent of the railroads changed all this. In the two decades between 1853 and 1872, four railroads built main and/or branch lines across McLean County with junctions in Bloomington. As a result the city made its greatest growth for these "steel highways" not only provided transportation of products and people but gave Bloomington its outstanding industry for many years—the Chicago and Alton Railroad shops. It was here that the first Pullman sleeping car was built.

Among other industries located here at various times were factories producing reapers, plows, brick and tile, and clothing. At one time coal was also successfully mined here. There have also been canning companies, brew-

eries, and drug and patent medicine concerns. Wholesale groceries, seed corn plants; publishers and printers; factories making farm elevators, stoves and furnaces, mattresses, candy, oil burners, washing machines as well as insurance companies and plants processing soy beans are among present day industries.

Bloomington industries of long standing include The American Foundry, MaGirl Foundry and Furnace Company, Funk Brothers Seed Company, Beich Candy Company, Pantagraph Printing and Stationery Company, Paxton Typewriter Company, Keiser-VanLeer Company, Portable Elevator Company, G. A. Ensenberger & Sons Furniture Company, J. A. Keck Furniture Company, C. W. Klemm, Incorporated, Ulbrich and Kraft, Moberly and Klenner, Rodgers Shoe Company, A. Livingston and Sons, Woolen Mill Store, Charles L. Miller Jewelry Store, Tappe Jewelry Store, Holder Hardware Company, G. H. Read and Brother, W. B. Read and Company, Public School Publishing Company, and others.

Coincidental with the development of Bloomington were various improvements and facilities to better living conditions.

Few people today can imagine that the streets of early Bloomington were impassable at times because of Illinois black mud, but such was the case until paving lifted it up and out of the mire. In 1869 a macadam pavement was laid on Grove Street between Main and the Illinois Central Railroad depot. Other pavements of this type were later laid in the City, and, in 1877, the first brick pavement in the United States was laid in Bloomington.

Bloomington in its early years might have been considered well "blacked out" for residents and business houses were lighted by candles, lamps and lanterns, and occasionally flares were put in front of merchandising establishments. In 1857 a gas company was established which furnished street lighting service, making Bloomington one of the first gas-lighted cities in the state, but even these gas lights would have been considered dim in the modern sense. Some years later, mantles were added to the gas lights which improved their effectiveness, but it was not until electricity provided power for lights in 1880 for streets and homes that the city could be considered out of the dark. Today Bloomington's electric power is jointly furnished by a municipal plant and power transported via highlines from the plant at Havana on the Illinois River. Its uses are many in addition to lighting. Gas is no longer used for lighting purposes but is used extensively in Bloomington-Normal for heating, cooking, and refrigeration.

In the Bloomington of 1830, means of locomotion were by foot, horse-back or in horse or oxen-drawn vehicles of various kinds. In 1868 transporta-

tion between Bloomington and Normal was improved for a time by the advent of a steam railway, but the engines proved such a nuisance that mules were hitched to the cars at the edge of Bloomington to pull them to the downtown district. An extended system of transportation used mule power until 1890 when electric power replaced the mules. In 1932 buses replaced the electric lines. Today's swift transportation—automobiles, buses, and trucks—would indeed have been awesome to Bloomington's first inhabitants.

Communication, likewise, was slow, being effected only by sending messengers or "posting" as it was then referred to. Telegraph service came with the railroads, and Bloomington was provided with a telephone system more than thirty years later. Bloomingtonians of today are using a dial system of modern design. World happenings reach them in a matter of minutes over radios and yet its citizens reach for greater improvement in communication as witnessed by the increasing installation of television sets, and radio-controlled city police squad cars and taxicabs.

First residents of Bloomington used cisterns and dug wells as sources of water supply, with lower fire insurance rates granted to residences so supplied. Later wells were dug or driven by property owners. With the sinking of a coal mine in early years, a "lake of water" (actually a water-bearing strata of gravel underlying Sugar Creek) was discovered under the City. This provided water for Bloomington residents from 1875 to 1903. At that time a concrete reservoir was built, well pits were sunk, and water was pumped into the reservoir from them. In 1926, interest was aroused in a project to build Lake Bloomington, twelve miles to the north, by damming the natural basin of Money Creek. A lake with a fourteen-mile shoreline was formed, a pumping station of modern design was constructed, and today the lake is the source of the city's water supply. Lake Bloomington has become a modest resort center with public bathing beaches, picnic areas, and numerous cabins have been constructed by individuals in the area surrounding the lake.

In early years sewers were built to take care of flood waters and to drain the then existing sloughs in western and southern areas of Bloomington. These have been improved and additions have been made. Recently the sewer system of the City has been supplemented or replaced by one designed to prevent basement flooding of the entire City in event of flash floods which are not uncommon to this area.

Fire protection has been available from the city's beginning with the famous Prairie Bird fire engine purchased by the city in 1855. Modern equipment, including a pulmotor, serves the city now.

Bloomington's police department continues to keep watch against law offenders, and brings to justice those guilty of misdemeanors within the City.

Ever mindful of provisions of the Northwest Ordinance, under which Illinois and subdivisions were organized, settlers of Bloomington saw that education was not neglected. As early as 1836-37, records show that Bloomington Township expended public money for paying teachers. However, until the free school law of 1855, subscription or private schools were in the majority. Two privately sponsored female seminaries were among those successfully conducted. In 1857 the public school era was ushered in by the establishment of a special charter district under the Bloomington Board of Education. Its school system has been superintended by many renowned educators and now is promoting an ever-growing plan for adult education. A number of parochial schools have long served the city.

Illinois Wesleyan University, a Methodist-supported liberal arts institution, was organized in 1850. The one-time law school was outstanding and its present-day music school is rated above average. Recently an extensive building program has been completed, and, in 1950, the school's centennial was appropriately celebrated.

To bolster and improve educational facilities, the value of libraries has long been recognized. A beginning was made in 1840. Library accommodations have been extended to include a library supported by city taxation, supplemented by the outstanding libraries of Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State Normal Universities, and the growing school library facilities.

Bloomington has been well served by various newspapers of which *The Daily Pantagraph* remains outstanding.

Spiritual guidance has been available to residents of Bloomington from its beginning, with capable leaders serving many denominations.

Cultural and social organizations of a great variety have added much to the pleasure and development of its citizenry.

Hospitals were provided as early as 1889 when St. Joseph's Hospital was opened as a Catholic-sponsored institution, followed by establishment of what is now known as Brokaw Hospital in Normal, a non-sectarian facility. In 1919 the Mennonite Hospital received its first patients. At present all three hospitals are seeking to make improvements in their services and facilities for people of Bloomington and surrounding territory.

Many outstanding men and women have served the medical, dental, and legal professions in Bloomington.

Withers' Homes for elderly women, Victory Hall for boys, Lucy Orme Morgan Home for girls, Booker T. Washington Home for colored children, Day Nursery for children of working mothers, and the Methodist Baby Fold

for children under six years of age provide care for other groups. Other organizations of a charitable nature are the Salvation Army, the Bureau of Social Service, and the Home, Sweet Home Rescue Mission.

Soon after its organization, Bloomington was the scene of many horse races, a favorite Sunday sport. Hunting and fishing were also common past-times, with "snipe hunting" being the customary introduction to sports of men new to the community. However, recreational facilities today are vastly improved. The park system of the City is outstanding. Miller park, its largest, boasts a lake for boating, fishing, and swimming; a zoo; publicly supported band concerts; a large pavilion; picnic facilities; play equipment; and acres of beautifully wooded, well-kept grounds. To the south of Miller Park lies Forest Park which has outdoor cooking facilities and which remains in more natural wooded state. Playgrounds and parks located elsewhere in the city include Franklin Park, O'Neil's playground, Fell Avenue playground (privately sponsored), and Buck Mann playground. Recently the State Farm Mutual Insurance Companies purchased and is improving the area surrounding what was once spring-fed Houghton Lake, south of the City. It has been named Wa-nik'-ska-ka, Chief White Hawk, a name given to George J. Mecherle, founder of the State Farm Insurance Companies, by the Winnebago Indians when he was taken into their tribe.

Since history is but a record of events, the story of Bloomington rightly includes mention of some of the outstanding happenings of its existence over more than a century. Not long after its establishment, the Indian chief, Black Hawk, was at war with the whites. Residents of the City and surrounding settlements banded together for mutual protection and to settle the controversy. Again in the late 1840s, Bloomington sent its share of men to the Mexican War; and, volunteers, as well as recruits, took part in the Civil War in such manner as to be a credit to their home folks. 1898-1899 saw soldiers serving in the Spanish-American War. Similarly, Bloomington can point with pride to the service of its men and women in World Wars I and II, for the call of duty took many to the battlefields while those at home also "served and waited".

At the northeast corner of Miller Park is a marble shaft, dedicated to Civil War soldiers of McLean County. Mementoes of later wars are located near the entrance of the park. Mr. and Mrs. John McBarnes exhibited their generosity toward soldiers and sailors of all wars by donating the building site and considerable sum of money to be used in the construction of what is known as the McBarnes Memorial Building at the corner of Grove and East Streets. It houses not only the offices of various veterans' organizations and

furnishes recreation roomis for them, but the McLean County Historical Society has its office and museum there.

The McLean County Historical Society was organized in 1892 and has a museum containing a variety of priceless relics as well as files of articles, pictures, and manuscripts of historical nature. The museum is open to the general public daily and is used by educational groups to provide a glimpse into the colorful past.

In 1930, McLean County celebrated its establishment with a centennial celebration, featuring a gala pageant, depicting outstanding events of the century.



BLOOMINGTON'S GREAT FIRE OF 1900 started in the building across to the south of the City Hall and burned three blocks westward and two blocks to the south. The Post Office was not damaged but the Court House was. Pumper from Peoria and Springfield halted the flames at the Ensenberger Building. Here the Bloomington Fire Department was watching for new outbreaks.

Two anniversaries were observed in 1950—establishment of the City of Bloomington in 1850 and the great fire of 1900, which wiped out almost the

entire business district. Undaunted, the merchants set about immediately to rebuild a bigger and better Bloomington.

Numerous persons, famous in their various fields, have claimed Bloomington as their home. Marie Litta, Madam Salzman-Stevens, Rachel Crothers, Maud Illington, Lou Burke, Wallace Bishop, Sidney Smith, and Charles Keeran, inventor of the first eversharp pencil, are but a few.

The world-renowned American Passion Play is produced annually in Bloomington at the Consistory Building on East Mulberry Street. Hundreds of thousands of persons have made the pilgrimage to view this drama of the life of Christ as portrayed by local persons from every walk of life.

Bloomington can yet be described as a "pleasant residence" which continues to serve its own citizens and those of the surrounding country well.

#### NORMAL

*Good Old Times*, published in 1874, gives this description of Normal, "Although Bloomington is yet in the first blush of city womanhood, her beautiful child, Miss Normal, is yet in her teens. Suitors already come to her, attracted by her building lots and shady streets". With the establishment of Normal University in 1857 on land donated by Jesse Fell, North Bloomington at the junction of the Illinois Central and Chicago and Alton Railroads passed quickly out of existence and the Town of Normal came into being.

As an enthusiastic lover of trees, who possessed a thorough understanding of tree growth and fruit culture, Jesse Fell certainly was and continues to be one of Normal's first citizens. He and his family were nurserymen of great renown, and our shady streets of today are the result of his handiwork. Many of the thousands of trees which yet line our streets, the campus of Illinois State Normal University, and the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School stand as a memorial to this great man, a friend of A. Lincoln.

Though the University, first teacher's college west of the Alleghenies, served as the chief business of Normal, it was not long until the town was well known as a nursery center. Another enterprise in the Normal of early days, was the importing, breeding, and selling of European draft horses.

For many years the town had no sewage disposal, electricity, or paved streets. Public transportation to Bloomington was furnished by cars drawn by dummy engines which were later changed to mule power. The mules gave way to electrically powered street cars and now motor buses carry Normal residents to Bloomington in a matter of minutes. In time a plan for sewage disposal was worked out in cooperation with Bloomington as was a contract for electric power, sources of which remain the same today.

Normal now boasts of the tree lined streets, an ever-increasing attractive residential section, rather complete merchandising facilities, a public library,

canning companies, greenhouses, and truck gardens. It also points with pride to its recently completed storm sewers and its own deep well water supply to which is attached a water softening plant.

The town is unique in that, except for a brief period following the repeal of the Volstead Act, liquor has never been sold here.

Illinois State Normal University continues to attract young men and women primarily interested in becoming teachers. Renowned methods of teaching have emanated from this institution, and prominent educators have served here.

Another state institution, begun in 1865, provides homes for the children of war veterans and is now known as the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School. Pleasant home surroundings, education, hospital care, and spiritual guidance are given the boys and girls entrusted to it.

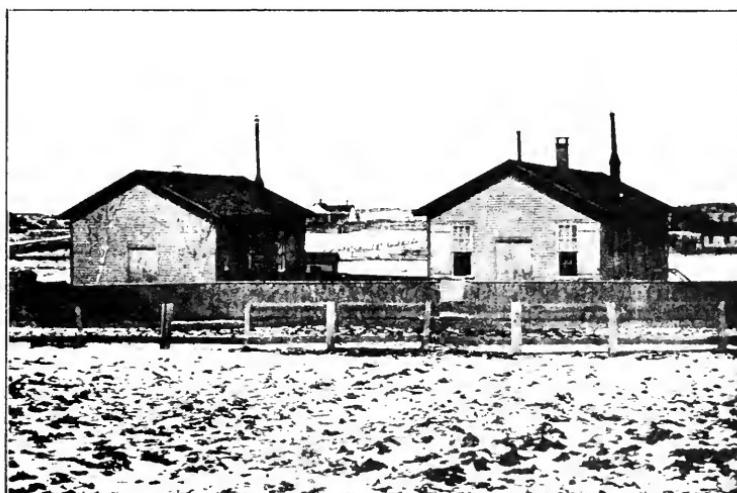
Fell Park provides picnic facilities and outdoor furnaces for cooking.

#### BLOOMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The first school in the village was opened by William Hodge in 1831, the year in which Bloomington's first town lots were sold. Amasa C. Washburn took over the school after that first year and continued with it until his retirement in 1834. A two-story building was erected at the corner of Main and Olive Streets where Lemuel Foster, a Presbyterian minister, conducted a well patronized seminary or "high school" for a number of years. Several other private or subscription schools were also operated in the town at the same time. Dr. Finley of Jacksonville later conducted a female academy at the Main and Olive Street location, but since he was not making expenses, a group of citizens interested in public welfare purchased the building and offered to donate it to someone who would continue the school. Professor Daniel Wilkins, who later became the first McLean County Superintendent of Schools, took the offer and maintained a seminary for young women there until 1857. Other schools for girls were successfully conducted in the city at the same time and a school, composed mostly of larger boys, was supervised by William Hobbs, an excellent teacher.

Subscription schools closed when the school law of 1855 provided taxes for support of free public schools. Under the new law, five districts were organized in Bloomington with school directors elected in each district. Temporary buildings were erected, or suitable rooms for school purposes were obtained, and teachers were employed to conduct the five schools. In 1857 the State of Illinois granted a special school charter to the City of Bloomington, establishing a seven-member board of education. This step marked the real beginning of the present Bloomington system. An election the first Monday in April, 1857 named these men as members of the first Board of Edu-

cation: C. P. Merriman, R. O. Warinner, O. T. Reeves, E. R. Roe, Eliel Barber, Samuel Gallager, and Henry Richardson. Thus the five city districts were consolidated under one school board which voted to add four new buildings at an estimated cost of \$12,000. However, the City Council refused to approve the school levy on the grounds that it would be burdensome to the taxpayers. Abraham Lincoln was engaged by the Board of Education as counsel to take action in the courts to compel approval of the levy. The Council then decided to reconsider the matter and the building levy was eventually approved. Increased interest in education was soon expressed by rapidly growing Bloomington, and there was a reconciliation of attitudes toward additional taxes for school purposes.



A PIONEER OF A GREAT SCHOOL SYSTEM — Barn School, Bloomington, District No. 5. Built at Bent site, 1855, moved to Sheridan location, 1871, destroyed by fire in 1879.

The fall of 1857 saw establishment of the first public high school on the second floor of the old Wilkins' Seminary, but following completion of the first of the four new buildings, known as No. 4, in 1858 at the corner of Evans and Taylor Streets, the high school was moved to its upper floor. Other elementary school buildings at this time included a two-room frame house on East Jefferson Street near the Illinois Central Railroad; two rooms in the basement of the Christian Church on West Jefferson Street; No. 2 a two-room frame structure at the corner of Monroe and Oak Streets; a two-room frame structure in the seven hundred block of South Madison known as "Yaller Cat" because of the color of its paint; two frame buildings, one two-room and

a one-room, known as the "Barn School", or officially as No. 5, located on Lee at Walnut Street; and No. 8, a one-room building for negro children between Grove and Olive Streets. (In 1872 the State Courts ruled that negro children be permitted to attend schools closer to their homes.)

1859 found Bloomington a straggling prairie town of about 7000 inhabitants, most of whom were poor because crops had failed and the financial crash of 1857 had ruined many. Consequently, the school building program was halted. The Civil War also checked the progress of school activities, though the first high school class under Principal John Hull was graduated in 1864, with Lucretia Billings and Sarah Walker Flagg receiving diplomas. It was not until 1871 that five more were graduated from the high school and since then classes have been graduating regularly.

By 1867 increased population and improved financial conditions justified another building program which included erection of No. 1 School at Empire and Park Streets in the northeast section of Bloomington. For a short time the high school occupied the upper rooms of this three-story brick building, which was planned to accommodate a total of six hundred pupils. 1869 brought the erection of a new high school building at Monroe and Oak Streets at a cost of \$30,354.60. No. 3 School was built the same year at Mill and Mason Streets in the third ward. \$18,950 was the cost of the No. 5 building completed in 1870, and the two frame houses, known as "Barn School" were then moved from the Lee and Walnut Street site to the present location of Sheridan School and called No. 6. No. 2's old building at the corner of Monroe and Oak Streets, east of the new high school was replaced by a two-story brick building in 1872, leaving the high school building to be used entirely by the high school. 1872 also marked the erection of No. 9 School at the present site of Washington School to provide accommodations for pupils living east of the Illinois Central Railroad; and, to provide for the increasing population on the south side of the city, the "Yaller Cat" building became No. 7 when it was moved in 1873 from South Madison Street to a location at Lincoln and Stewart Streets. No. 6, the old "Barn School" on the present Sheridan site, was destroyed by fire in 1879 and a new one-story brick building with basement classrooms replaced it, but the basement was frequently too damp for classes so the building was remodelled in 1894 to include second story classrooms. To relieve overcrowded conditions at No. 2, Market School was built in 1877. It was a four-room frame building with basement located at Mason and Market Streets.

An eight-room building and basement was erected in 1879 at the corner of Jefferson and Clayton Streets. Known as the Jefferson School, it was intended to accommodate pupils on the east side of Main Street, thus abandon-

ing the East Jefferson Street building and No. 9 at Washington and State Streets. This decade of building provided comfortable class rooms for most of the children of the rapidly growing city, for there were marked improvements in heating, lighting, and sanitation as better equipment came into use.

1884 was the year that No. 4 School at Evans and Taylor Streets added more rooms to relieve overcrowding; and rapidly growing Stevensonville asked for school facilities, resulting in the erection in 1888 of Raymond School, four rooms with basement, in the 1400 block of West Grove Street at a cost of about \$4000.

During all this time the school board had carefully selected the most desirable textbooks but the course of study had not been well planned. In 1883 a revised manual was issued listing subjects considered necessary for well trained pupils of that time. In 1891 another revision of the manual was published, including music, drawing, kindergarten, and supplementary reading lists. With this definite program, both teachers and pupils found increased enjoyment in their work.

"Yaller Cat", or No. 7, was abandoned in 1895 upon the completion of the first building of modern construction at Lee and Miller Streets. When in December, 1895 the Board of Education adopted a resolution to name the schools for some important person, instead of being designated by numbers, this new building became Lincoln School for Abraham Lincoln; No. 1 at the corner of Park and Empire became Franklin School for Benjamin Franklin; No. 2 asked that the name, Edwards, be given it in honor of Richard Edwards, one time president of Illinois State Normal University; No. 3 at Mill and Mason Streets became Irving for Washington Irving; and the new school built in 1896 at Washington and State Streets was Washington for George Washington. No. 4, the fourth ward school, at the corner of Taylor and Evans was named Emerson for Ralph Waldo Emerson; No 5 at the corner of Lee and Walnut Streets was the Hawthorne, later named for Horatio G. Bent who had served on the Board of Education for many years; and No. 6 on Livingston at Walnut was designated Sheridan for Philip Sheridan.

September, 1896 found the high school on West Monroe overcrowded with an enrollment of 307, but January 1, 1897 marked the dedication of the new high school building on Monroe at Prairie Street—a modern structure with broad corridors, spacious stairways, and a large assembly or study hall. Though Bloomington High School had been on the state accredited list since 1880, the new quarters gave it an excellent rating among high schools of the state.

Since Franklin School had become obsolete, a \$25,000 building was erected in 1900 on the same site. In 1904 a new Edwards building was

erected at Market and Allin Streets; and No. 2 and Market Street Schools were then vacated. The next year a new structure replaced the Irving building which had been in use at that location since 1869. The old fourth ward school at Taylor and Evans was superseded by a new Emerson building at Clinton and Bell Streets in 1907.



BLOOMINGTON'S NEW HIGH SCHOOL, 1917.

(Courtesy Keystone View Company.)

Again the high school building could not accommodate increasing enrollment and accrediting authorities were demanding rooms for vocational subjects, up-to-date equipment, and newer architectural details. Consequently a new site was purchased on East Washington Street, the present location,

and a half-million dollar, well equipped, and modern building was taken over when the seven hundred students and faculty marched into it on a pleasant day in January, 1917. The former high school building was then remodeled to accommodate elementary pupils and Jefferson School was transferred there in 1918.

Bloomington High School has offered an attractive, well-administered program under four principals deserving of mention: E. L. Boyer, 1896-1907; William Wallis, 1907-1918; Warren A. Goodier, 1918-1940; and P. C. Kurtz, 1940 to the present time.

1930 marked replacement of the old Sheridan school building of 1879 by a structure of modern design. Similarly, the Raymond building was replaced by a modern building at Olive and Magoun Streets. Unfortunately Jefferson School was destroyed by fire in March 1932 but a modern fireproof building was ready for use the next year. In 1935 the new Abraham Lincoln School replaced the 1895 Lincoln building, and a wing was added at the northeast corner of the high school in 1937.

A large dwelling at 504 East Jefferson Street was remodelled for an Administration Building in 1947. At that time extensive improvements were made at Washington School. By 1949 increasing enrollments, the junior high school program, lack of facilities for physical education and hot lunch programs, demand for additional classroom space and community rooms required the expenditure of about \$635,000. The Oakland School, a new type seven-room building, costing approximately \$205,000, was erected at Oakland and Woodland Avenues. \$260,000 was spent for the addition at Irving School. Improvements at Bent School cost about \$98,000; at Franklin, \$40,000; and at Washington, an additional \$30,000.

Eminent educators who served as Superintendents of Bloomington schools include: Sarah E. Raymond, 1874-1892; Edwin Van Petten, 1892-1901; J. K. Stapleton, 1901-1920; Samuel K. McDowell, 1920-1935; George N. Wells, 1944 to present. Space does not permit tribute to the many prominent men who have so ably served on Boards of Education and the many excellent teachers whose untiring efforts helped the young people of Bloomington to become well prepared for lives of service. A word of commendation is also due the custodians who have kept the school buildings in good condition.

Bloomington continues to express a profound interest in the education of its boys and girls — a trait which marked establishment of the city's earliest educational facilities. Members of the board of education and superintendents of the system have constantly been on the alert to keep pace with changing educational practices that they deem advisable for equipping

Bloomington's youth with the means of taking its place in the ever-changing world—from an era of community self-sufficiency to the present role of world citizens.

#### BLOOMINGTON PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

A parochial school is one supported by a church or a parish. The German-Lutherans built such a school at the northeast corner of Main and Lincoln Streets about 1858; and the Catholics then established a school at the southeast corner of Main and Bissell. These church schools helped relieve crowded conditions in the public schools on the south side of Bloomington.

*German Lutheran School:* The pastor of the newly organized Lutheran Church served as teacher in their school, but a regular teacher was engaged in 1865. A few years later two teachers were required. In 1893 the two-story brick building in the seven hundred block on South Madison Street was erected, where three classrooms were used. A modern building was dedicated in 1941, as the Trinity Lutheran School. A large gymnasium and cafeteria have helped to make this school an interesting community center. John F. Ruecklos, who became principal in 1912, served in that position for thirty-three years. They have maintained a good elementary school with periods for religious instruction. All classwork has been in English since World War I.

*Holy Trinity School:* The history of the Catholic schools of Holy Trinity Parish begins in 1863, when Father Kennedy erected the convent at the corner of Center and Chestnut Streets. School was conducted there by the Sisters of St. Joseph until 1876, when the Dominican Sisters were placed in charge. The school was then known as St. Joseph's Academy. In 1884 Father M. Weldon built another school, costing \$26,000, at the northeast corner of Center and Locust streets, which was chartered as St. Mary's College High School. The Dominican Sisters were the teachers with Father Weldon in charge. These schools used the Illinois State Course of Study, with additional daily periods of religious instruction. The high school offered a four year program and advanced courses in music and art were also given at St. Joseph's Academy. Trinity High School on the west side of Center Street was built by Father Stephen N. Moore in 1927. The school is modern and fully accredited.

*St. Patrick's School:* During 1901 St. Patrick's Parish built a school east of their church in the 1200 block on West Locust Street. A convent was also erected for the Dominican Sisters, who teach in the school.

*St. Mary's German-Catholic School:* The frame church on Taylor Street was built in 1867. A school was opened there in 1873 by the Rev. W. J. Revis. Later the church was raised and the basement was remodeled for

classrooms. In 1877 the Ursuline Sisters took charge of the school and remained until 1883. Mr. Andrew Rothman conducted the classes from then until 1888, when the Franciscan Sisters were placed in charge. The new church on Jackson Street was dedicated in 1887 and the old church building was turned into a school. The new brick school replaced the old structure in 1902. Classes were conducted in English and German with a period for religious instruction each day.

## Section IV

# County Government, Business, And Special Agencies

### GOVERNMENT

McLean County was incorporated by act of the State Legislature December 25, 1830. The county-seat was located April 21, 1831. Most of the area had been a part of Tazewell County since 1827 with the county seat at Mackinaw town. When the first settlers came to Blooming Grove in 1822; Fayette County, with the county seat at Vandalia, included all of our present county except a narrow strip on the west side which was then in Sangamon.



Log cabin built at Saybrook in 1925 for the Centennial Celebration of the settlement of Cheney's Grove.

The new county was named for John McLean of Shawneetown, the first Representative in Congress from the new State of Illinois.

The first Board of County Commissioners elected in McLean County met at the house of James Allin in Bloomington, May 16, 1831. They were:

Jonathan Cheney of Cheney's Grove

Timothy Hoblit from Waynesville (now in DeWitt County)

Jesse Havens of Havens Grove (now Hudson)

The following voting precincts were organized: Kickapoo Precinct in the southwestern part of the county; Salt Creek Precinct included Old Town, Cheney's Grove and settlements to the south; Bloomington Precinct took in Blooming Grove, Dry and Twin Groves and Havens Grove; Mackinaw Precinct included the settlements in Money Creek and Mackinaw Timber extending north twelve miles into what is now Livingston County, then but thinly settled along Rook's Creek. The place of voting for Mackinaw precinct was John Patton's cabin at Pleasant Hill. Panther Creek Precinct was principally in what is now Woodford County, but it also included Stout's Grove and White Oak communities.

The duties of the County Commissioners were similar to those of the Board of Supervisors of today. Such duties included the levying of the taxes for county expenses, laying out roads, organizing voting precincts and supervising the county officers. Under the Commission System, the County Treasurer was Assessor and the Sheriff was Collector. If tax money didn't come in on time it was his duty to go and get it. Two constables and two justices of the peace were elected in each voting precinct. The Illinois Constitution of 1848 provided for Township Organization, and soon sentiment developed in the outside precincts to adopt that form of county government.

Many felt that those living near the court house were being favored especially when the County Court early in 1857 gave \$70,000 from the sale of swamp lands to have Normal University located at North Bloomington. Since money was rather scarce at that time it left an opening for criticism which was taken advantage of by friends of Township Organization. a vote on the proposition to adopt this system was taken November 3, 1857. At this election Township Organization was adopted. A committee was then appointed to establish towns or townships and name them, a task completed the following year. Since then, McLean County has been governed by Township Organization. Supervisors and other town officers are elected in the local townships.

#### COUNTY BUILDINGS

*Court Houses:* McLean County has had four court houses, all of which have been on the block bounded by Main, Washington, Center, and Jefferson Streets. Built in the summer of 1832 at a cost of \$339.25, the first court house was not only used by public officers and for public meetings but served as a

school building. It was a one-story frame structure, eighteen by thirty feet, with a fireplace at each end.

In 1836, it was replaced by a two-story brick building, costing \$6,375. Atop it was a square cupola housing a bell used to call court and other meetings. The court room was located on the first floor and had bleacher-like seats for the audience. To this building came many illustrious men—David Davis, John M. Scott, Leonard Swett, Stephen A. Douglas, and Abraham Lincoln. In 1860 fireproof wings were added as a protection to county records.

A beautiful building of Joliet limestone was begun in 1868 and completed in 1879. Though it was supposed to be fireproof, the doors, window and door frames were burned in the Bloomington fire of 1900. Heat scaled the limestone and the bell of the clock fell to the basement.

Costing \$472,000, the present three-story county building of Bedford, Indiana limestone was completed in 1902. Except for the addition of a third story, it very much resembles the former building in outward appearance. Marble and scagliola are used in its interior finish. It is entirely fireproof and modern in every way.

*Jails:* McLean County's first jail was built in 1832 on the court house square and was a sixteen-foot square building of hewn logs erected at a contract price of \$331. An upper room was used to imprison debtors and others who committed minor offenses while the lower room was for those who were accused or convicted of more serious crimes. An outside stairway led to the upper room, which was also the only means of entering the lower room. A prisoner to be incarcerated for a serious crime, therefore, was led up the outside stairway into the upper room, a trapdoor in the floor of the upper room was opened, a ladder put down, and the offender was thrust down into the inner darkness of the dungeon. The ladder was then removed and the trapdoor closed and locked. The jail door had a lock plus a log chain with lock as extra precaution.

The second jail was built in 1840 at the southwest corner of Center and Market Streets. The hewn logs from the first jail were used in constructing this building and the outside was covered with dressed weather boarding. This two-story building measured fourteen feet north and south by thirty-four feet east and west. The two rooms with an entry between on the first floor served as the jail while the upper story was used as quarters for the jailer. The cells were lined with oak planks and in the front door as well as the doors in between were driven nails every two inches with the points sticking through to the inside. The west room was the dungeon and the east room was used for "poor debtors". A large stove in the connecting hall furnished heat which

was appreciated by the less hardy prisoners. Though there was no plumbing in it, sanitary conditions were some better than in the former building. After the third jail was built, the City of Bloomington took over this building as a "calaboose".

Again in 1848 a jail was constructed on the court house square. Hewn logs were used inside with brick facing on the outside. This was a two-story building measuring twenty by forty-one feet and had an adjoining twenty-five foot square stockade made of boards twelve feet high. The toilet was located in this stockade. The two jail rooms were heated with grates and were furnished with beds and straw mattresses, wooden chairs, and water pails with dippers. The jailer lived upstairs and had his office there.

The fourth jail was built at a cost of \$13,150 on the site of the second jail at the southwest corner of Center and Market Streets. Erected in 1857 after the second jail was torn down, this building is yet standing. The front part was the sheriff's office. The "poor debtors'" room was also used for women prisoners when there were any. There were two cell blocks of five cells each with two bunks in each cell. At first a water closet was supplied from a tank on top of the building, but was connected with the city water system in 1876. Many prisoners escaped from this building because it was poorly planned.

In 1882 the present county jail of brick and stone trimming was erected on Madison Street at Monroe, at a cost of \$72,000.

*County Farm:* In order to care for indigent aged residents of McLean County, the Board of Supervisors voted in 1860 to buy two hundred acres of land four miles south of Bloomington at a cost of about \$25 per acre. Buildings were erected to house the inmates and farm buildings were provided to carry on the farm work and to store crops. Those persons able to assist with the farm work did so. The buildings were improved through the years and an additional one hundred forty acres were added to the original farm. When old age assistance was established by the federal and state governments, the need for such an institution diminished. The present high cost of building construction has caused abandonment of plans for building at the farm a county nursing home for elderly persons. It is hoped that the commendable project may be completed in the near future.

#### FINANCES AND BANKING

It is very difficult for people of the present generation to imagine the general scarcity of money in the early days of McLean County. The first land entries occurred in 1829 and the cost of government land was \$1.25 per acre. Settlers were fortunate who brought enough money with them to pur-

chase a farm or small timber tract, because it was almost impossible to borrow money and rates of interest were frequently as high as two per cent per month. The influx of newcomers from 1833 to 1836 brought on a land and lot speculation which ended with the panic of 1837.

Miserable banking laws were largely to blame for the general poverty of the country until about 1850. During much of this period the people did without money to a great extent, preferring to barter and exchange among themselves. Money lenders were charging ten per cent interest on their money. In 1845 the Legislature established six per cent as the legal rate of interest. Four years later, however, a rate of ten per cent was again permitted.

As there were no local banks, business and cattle men did their banking in Springfield, Peoria, and Chicago. Because of prairie bandits, armed messengers were used in the transfer of money between the local community and the banks. Stockmen frequently received large sums of money from sales in Chicago, so there was the constant fear of being robbed on the return trip. When Isaac Funk, for example, delivered a large herd of cattle, his cash receipts were sewn in the clothing of his eldest son, George. The sixteen year old boy mounted their fleetest horse and started for home, losing no time in reaching the home cabin or some place where the money would be safe.

Banking laws in force from 1850 to 1861 permitted banks to use state bonds as a basis for issuing their own currency, which became worthless if the bank failed or the bonds depreciated in value. Thus the term "wild cat money" came into use. After 1850 three banks were started in Bloomington. These banks issued paper money on the basis of state bonds.

The Panic of 1857 was followed by the disaster of war in 1861. Gold almost went out of circulation in 1862; and the gold value of the greenbacks went down to thirty-five cents on the dollar. All business suffered. At this time corn dropped to ten cents per bushel. When the United States Government offered to bring out the gold reserve, the situation improved. After 1873 an era of prosperity began. The prairies were settled and nearby markets were provided at new towns on the railroads.

Another recession took place after 1892, with many strikes and factories closed causing much unemployment. Grain prices went down to new lows, but finances were on a sounder basis and a rather prompt recovery resulted. For the next twenty-five years farmers enjoyed prosperity. New factories were built and business in general expanded.

After World War I prices became inflated, speculations in stocks and land became rampant, and in 1929 the crash came. The financial situation became worse as time passed with many banks failing. On March 6, 1933, President Roosevelt issued a proclamation closing all the banks in the country.

The "bank holiday" extended to March 15, while banks were examined and those with sufficient cash and government securities were licensed to reopen. Many opened their doors immediately, others were able to resume business in a few weeks or months. Banks which did not reopen were required to liquidate their assets. In some instances the depositors were paid in full with interest, but in others depositors lost heavily.

The Federal banking laws of 1933 and 1935 protect the depositors up to \$5,000 and also safeguard banking interests. This insurance was increased to \$10,000 in 1950. Today banking is on a sound basis. Some of the small town banks alone have more deposits than all money in circulation in the entire state in the 1840s.

The following banks are now operating in our county:

1. Anchor State Bank, Anchor, Illinois
2. Bloomington, Illinois
  - a. American State Bank
  - b. Corn Belt Bank
  - c. McLean County Bank
  - d. National Bank of Bloomington
  - e. Peoples Bank
3. Farmers State Bank, Carlock, Illinois
4. Cropsey Citizens' State Bank, Cropsey, Illinois
5. Peoples' State Bank of Colfax, Colfax, Illinois
6. Arrowsmith State Bank, Arrowsmith, Illinois
7. First National Bank of Danvers, Danvers, Illinois
8. State Bank of Gridley, Gridley, Illinois
9. Farmers' State Bank of Heyworth, Heyworth, Illinois
10. Peoples' Bank, Lexington, Illinois
11. LeRoy State Bank, LeRoy, Illinois
12. Normal, Illinois
  - a. First National Bank of Normal
  - b. Normal State Bank
13. State Bank of Saybrook, Saybrook, Illinois
14. Stanford State Bank, Stanford, Illinois

#### AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Improved farm machinery was the key which opened the prairies to agricultural development, notably the plow and the reaper. Successful draining of the land was also an important step forward. Other great forces which have served to further develop the agricultural status of McLean County are

animal and plant improvement; scientific knowledge, especially chemistry; federal legislation; and education.

Noteworthy is the nationally and internationally known McLean County System of Swine Sanitation. Education has served to acquaint farmers with the improvement of purebred breeding.

Development of hybrid seed has resulted in increased grain yields. Funk Brothers Seed Company of Bloomington has steadily worked on seed improvement for more than half a century.

Knowledge of chemistry has equipped farmers with the ability to test soil. Application of limestone and phosphate has restored soil fertility. Acres of land in the county that had become worthless from erosion are being reclaimed by improved methods of farming.

Federal legislation which changed the rural picture include establishment of Land Grant State Agricultural Colleges, which date to the time of Abraham Lincoln's presidency. During World War I period the Smith-Lever Act and the Smith-Hughes Act resulted in establishment of Farm and Home Bureaus and Vocational Agriculture in high schools. These pieces of legislation have been of inestimable value in agricultural progress.

Education has been the chief aim of all who serve agricultural interests in any way for worthwhile programs have been inaugurated and carried on by farm organizations.

The local Daily Pantagraph, McLean County's newspaper, has served ably in the capacity of bringing to its farmer readers the latest and best information on agriculture, with particular emphasis on better methods of raising livestock and grains, improved machinery and uses of machinery, better accommodation for storing crops, and plans for control of plant and animal menaces of various kinds.

Thus it can readily be seen that farmers of today are artisans of the good earth, believing firmly that agricultural prospects will be better in the future.

#### FARM ORGANIZATIONS

Because of the generally accepted fact that anyone could farm, education of farmers was for many years considered unnecessary. When, at the turning of the century, there were no new lands to be homesteaded in the United States, this attitude toward agriculture as an art changed.

*Farm Bureau:* McLean County was one of the first counties in Illinois to recognize the fact that soil fertility could be restored to "tired" or worn out land, that proper feeding of livestock and management could produce meat more effectively, and that farming was truly a major business of the nation. Though the change was gradual, a few progressive farmers in the

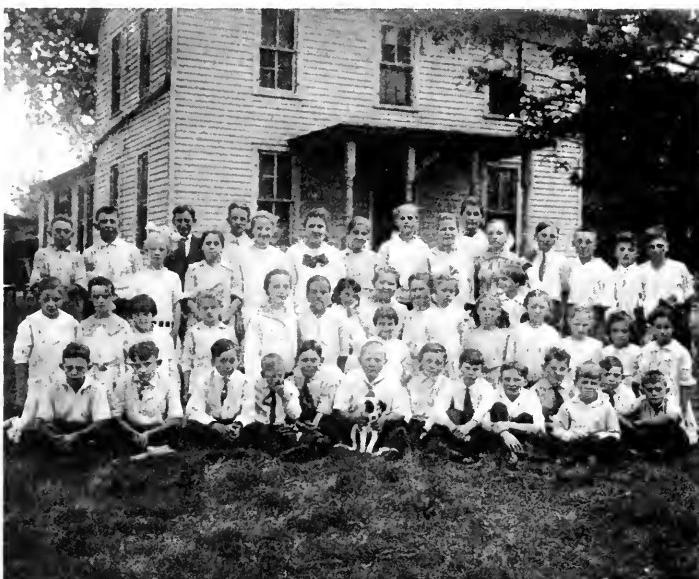
county realized "that better farming for better living through cooperation" was a worth while goal. The first group was organized in 1914 as the "McLean County Better Farming Association." A year later the name was changed to McLean County Farm Bureau, an organization which during the next five years affiliated with the Illinois Agricultural Association and later with the American Farm Bureau Federation. Cooperating also with the Illinois Extension Service of the University of Illinois and the United States Department of Agriculture, vast technical knowledge was acquired and put into practice on many of our farms.

A few of the many changes which have taken place include replacement of the old corn-oats rotation by a four, five or six-year rotation, with one or two years of a legume crop. The thousands of tons of limestone and phosphate that have been applied to McLean County soil plus the use of improved seed, namely hybrids, have resulted in increased grain yields. Corn, for example, has increased from an average of about thirty-five bushels to nearly sixty bushels per acre. Soil erosion is prevented at the present time by contour farming, strip cropping, and grass waterways. Quality of livestock has improved by using the McLean County System of Swine Sanitation, balanced rations of feed, and selective purebred breeding.

Cooperative service organizations came into existence as farmers felt the need for them. Among such organizations are a company handling petroleum products, feed, and fertilizers; fire and casualty insurance companies; a livestock marketing agency; a dairy processing plant; slaughtering and locker service; and two credit coops. The Cornbelt Electric Coop working with the United States Rural Electrification Association has brought electricity to most of the county since 1939. Horse farming and hand labor have been supplanted by tractors and electricity.

The young people of our county have not been overlooked in these years of agricultural progress. In 1917, when World War I was at its peak, the cry was, "More food for the boys over there!" The following year 1435 rural boys and girls were enrolled in a 4-H Club program to raise gardens and livestock as their part of the war effort. William B. Brigham, then Assistant to the County Superintendent of Schools, worked in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Illinois Extension Service to direct this successful program. The boys' and girls' club work was transferred in 1919 to the Farm and Home Bureaus, where for the past thirty years it has been considered the greatest project of the two organizations. McLean County's 4-H Clubs are affiliated with the national organization, which has as its aim the development of the *Head, Heart, Hands, and Health* for service to the community and the nation. Projects

include livestock, crops, poultry, gardening, cooking, sewing, and homemaking. In addition to the development of community interests, youths gain much from the social contacts which extend throughout the state and nation.



DRY GROVE TOWNSHIP 4-H CLUB PICNIC at E. O. Ropp's,  
July 4, 1918.

The idea of a 4-H Fair was conceived in 1923. About thirty boys and girls exhibited livestock, a few vegetables, and sewing at the Ed Coolidge farm three miles west of Bloomington on an August afternoon. About 150 persons attended the event. The 1949 edition of the McLean County 4-H Fair featured nearly sixteen hundred exhibitors of all phases of agriculture and homemaking. The four-day show attracted 20,000 persons.

4-H boys and girls learn by doing. These efforts hold pride and confidence for their future and the future of our nation.

Agriculture in McLean County has come a long way in the past four decades. More advancement is hoped for in the years to come through cooperative programs and continued development of the 4-H Clubs of our country, for here, in a large measure, rests the basis for national progress.

*National Grange:* At the close of the Civil War, agricultural prospects were very discouraging, prices were low, and farmers were struggling with debts. Relief from these hardships was sought through organization in some sections of the country. Such an organization was the National Grange

which came into being at this time. Started in 1867, the Grange was a secret organization of farmers whose avowed objectives were cooperation in trading, securing less expensive transportation through regulation of railroads, and the intellectual, social, and moral improvement of its members. Though the movement was somewhat slow at first, it soon spread rapidly with meetings being held at rural schoolhouses. More than forty Granges were organized in McLean County with stores established to save money for grange members being opened in most of the towns. Some of the stores were not well handled and in a few cases store managers disappeared with the money. Another enterprise which was started in 1881 was the Grange Fair held two miles southwest of Bloomington. This was held annually until 1890. However, the Grange did not prove as practical as expected and the organization in this county declined rapidly and in a short time ceased to exist. In 1930 the Maize Grange, a subordinate chapter of the national organization, was established at Normal. The membership is comprised largely of agriculture students of Illinois State Normal University. Interesting meetings are being conducted by the group.

*The Farmers' Mutual Benefit Association:* The F. M. B. A. was started in 1877 for the purpose of bringing relief to agriculture through political efforts. Great interest in the organization was shown in some of the western states, but no great interest developed in this county although a number of meetings were held here. The People's Party which carried five states in the national election of 1892 was promoted by this Association, but following the election, it was disbanded.

*Farmers' Institutes:* Until recent years, the Farmers' Institute held interesting meetings in the county. As an outgrowth of the Grange, the Institutes have been replaced by the Farm and Home Bureaus with their many interests.

The National Farm Bureau Federation, the National Grange, and the National Farmers' Union are working for legislation to aid agriculture and adjust many of its problems.

#### HOME BUREAU

In 1917, McLean County, prosperous and progressive in agriculture, had no organization of rural women, though they worked actively in such community services as the church, school, and Red Cross. This lack of organization hampered the County Food Conservation Committee during World War I in its efforts to carry food saving information into rural homes. Help was sought through the Smith-Lever Act, which provided assistance for homemakers by federal grants for Home Economics Extension work. Thus

the McLean County Home Improvement Association came into being. Enough members were secured and sufficient funds were raised to employ a Home Adviser through the Extension Department of the University of Illinois, and active work was begun June 1, 1918.



ILLINOIS' BLACK MUD hampered auto operation, 1922.  
(Photo Courtesy of Clara R. Brian, Home Adviser)

Lessons on food saving were started, a municipal canning kitchen was put in operation, and in September, 1918, the Association began one of its long-time projects, the hot school lunch. At that time only six of two hundred twenty-eight schools had ever served hot lunches. This project continued to grow until one hundred eighty-eight of the schools were carrying on the lunch program, a status which was maintained until the federal government took over the work. That first year also saw the start of the Home Bureau Bulletin and three 4-H Clubs for girls were organized. Thrift lessons, home and poultry accounts, rat and mice campaigns, chicken culling, household equipment study, and a campaign for milk drinking were among projects sponsored by the group during this era. In 1919 the name was changed to the McLean County Home Bureau.

Early handicaps included suspicion and skepticism on the part of homemakers, bad roads, and weather conditions. However, wise methods of approach, a practical choice of subjects, and a calm philosophy were employed by the Home Adviser and county officers.

Because the Home Bureau has stayed with an educational program for better homemaking and has not entered the field of commerce, a sincere respect of its work has been developed by business and professional groups and a closer cooperation in community activities has been achieved. Perhaps the annual 4-H Club County Fair is one of the best examples of interest shown by groups not connected with Farm and Home Bureaus. One store maintained a rest room for children with a trained attendant. Another sent their food demonstrator to help in the food kitchen, where all other help was volunteer from over the County.

During the thirty years since Home Bureau was organized, membership has grown from thirty volunteer workers to a grand total of twenty-five hundred earnest, enthusiastic rural and urban women. Today it is one of the strongest, most far-reaching educational factors in McLean County. No question is too trivial or technical but that help is given homemakers if an answer is possible. Thus, the McLean County Home Bureau has grown into a cohesive, efficient body ready to meet the demands of the future, and the County in turn is feeling the effect of such organized effort.

Much credit is due Mrs. Spencer Ewing for the organization of the McLean County Home Bureau and for her many years of loyal service in its behalf.

#### CHURCHES

Religious worship and spiritual guidance have always been considered necessary by McLean County citizens. As early as 1822, Reverend Jesse Walker visited settlers at Blooming Grove, and, as far as it is known, preached the first sermon in what became McLean County. Peter Cartwright, the famous evangelist, also visited here, coming from his home in Sangamon County. Most ministers of the early days were itinerant preachers of the gospel. It was not long, however, until churches were established with regular leaders in the groves, and later in the open country so that farmers and their families could easily attend, and near which cemeteries were often located. Churches, too, were among the early buildings in each settlement or town.

Bloomington-Normal and towns in the surrounding area have always supported churches of many denominations, with but few of the rural churches maintaining active congregations today. These include the Christian at Twin Grove, Mennonite at North Danvers and East White Oak, and Evangelical Lutheran Churches in Anchor, Lawndale, and Yates Townships. Many country churches were moved to new towns or villages, others were torn down and the membership transferred elsewhere.

Along plans for world unity, we now find followers of the various faiths united in their efforts to bring about such things as world peace and world understanding, but their foremost duty is to make each community a truly better place in which to live.

#### LIBRARIES IN MCLEAN COUNTY

Citizens of early Bloomington and McLean County realized the value of books, for through them they could learn and secure a wider culture. Amasa C. Washburn brought about eight hundred volumes to Bloomington as early at 1833 which comprised the Presbyterian Sunday School library. About 1840 one thousand volumes were purchased in Philadelphia and brought to Bloomington to be loaned free to its citizens, making a splendid start for a library. Those chiefly responsible for this early contribution were Dr. W. C. Hobbs, who served as librarian, James Allin, and Jesse Fell. Unfortunately the books were soon scattered and the library collapsed. Sunday School libraries numbered four and totaled eight hundred books in the federal census of 1850. The Ladies' Library Association of Bloomington secured five hundred volumes by donations and sale of memberships and opened on Center Street, February 28, 1857. The Illinois Legislature granted a charter to the Bloomington Library Association February 23, 1867, with both men and women holding office. This library was forced to close its doors for lack of funds August 7, 1880, but in September it was again able to open because of the popular subscription received.

In May, 1882 Mrs. Sarah B. Withers presented her first home at the corner of East and Washington Streets to the Association for a library; and on this site the present Withers Library was erected, becoming a city-supported institution in 1894.

Miss Nellie E. Parham served ably as librarian from 1899 through October 1, 1945. It was through her efforts and those of the interested staff of assistants that Withers Public Library of Bloomington continued to grow and improve until it now includes a large reference department, children's department, record collection, and the outside circulation during 1948-1949 was 203,710. It was the meeting place of thirty-two civic organizations in 1949. Weekly movie reviews are posted in the lobby and the card catalog is of value to those seeking information on a variety of subjects. The Nellie E. Parham Branch Library at Lake Bloomington supplies a well stocked library of good reading materials for campers there. Inter-library service with other libraries and the state library at Springfield brings help to those who ask for it. Bedside library service is provided in the three city hospitals.

Smith Library at Lexington is also a city library. Other libraries in Mc-

Lean County supported by public taxation are the public library of Normal; township libraries at Chenoa, Colfax, Gridley, Heyworth, and McLean; association libraries at Carlock, Cooksville, Danvers, and Towanda; while Crumbaugh Memorial Library at LeRoy is an endowed institution.

Libraries of the two universities—Illinois Wesleyan and Illinois State Normal—extend their facilities to townspeople for use in the buildings, with materials being loaned for outside use only to students of these institutions. All McLean County elementary and high schools also have rather complete library accommodations, including current publications in great variety.

#### COUNTY NEWSPAPERS

Since the day in 1836 when Jesse Fell brought the first printing press to the town of Bloomington, Illinois for the purpose of printing a newspaper, there have been more than one hundred forty newspapers published within the confines of McLean County. Some of them had lives of only a few months while others reached a venerable age. Among the longest lived was the Daily Bulletin, an evening paper, which was merged with The Pantagraph in 1927. The Pantagraph is unquestionably the oldest of them all, having been published continuously since 1846.

The Pantagraph (meaning Write All) was given its present name in 1854, but was previously published under the names Intelligencer, Observer, and Western Whig.

It has been estimated that at least 86% of the families in McLean County read the Pantagraph, but the weekly paper of the small town and its environs also serves a very definite purpose, for it carries a type of detailed personal or local news usually not of widespread interest.

At the present time there are fourteen newspapers including the Pantagraph, published within McLean County. The Pantagraph is the only daily; the others are published once a week. The list includes the ARROWSMITH NEWS, THE CLIPPER-TIMES (Chenoa), THE COLFAX PRESS, THE DANVERS INDEPENDENT, THE GRIDLEY ADVANCE, THE HEYWORTH STAR, THE LEROY JOURNAL, THE LEXINGTON UNIT-JOURNAL, THE McLEAN LENS, THE NORMALITE (Normal), THE SAYBROOK GAZETTE, THE STANFORD STAR and the McLEAN COUNTY COURIER.

The Pantagraph prides itself today upon being a non-partisan, unbiased public servant. Public welfare has been the reoccurring theme of many of its editorials and avowed policies.

Public argument over the merits of various farm machinery led to holding contests under actual working conditions where manufacturers were invited

to prove their claims for their machines. Similar meets or demonstrations are still held today as is evidenced by the annual Pantagraph Farm Day.

The Pantagraph is said to be the first newspaper to have a daily farm page. The late A. J. Bill was appointed editor when the farm page was established in 1897, and he served until his death in 1935. His son, Frank Bill, then became farm editor and at the present time is doing a nationally recognized job. Soil conservation, weed eradication, better roads for the farmers, development of the hybrid corn program and improved farm sanitation methods are among the many projects sponsored by the Pantagraph and its farm editors.

The effort made by the Pantagraph to give its subscribers accurate information about things going on in the world has been apparent since they hired a special war correspondent to cover the battle of Corinth in the Civil War. Today telegraph news is received from both the Associated Press and the United Press wires. In addition, AP wirephotos are received daily to help bring a better picture of the world at large. Pantagraph columnists include the best in the country, and they deal with a variety of subjects as health, homes, the problems of everyday living, international affairs and politics.

The Pantagraph is achieving an international reputation for the Community Betterment Plan which it has sponsored with the co-operation of the University of Illinois.

As a business institution, the influence of The Pantagraph in Bloomington and its environs is definitely felt for it has a payroll of over \$400,000 annually. The editorial and the news departments employ 28 people while 120 others are employed by the business offices and mechanical departments. News from the territory serviced by the paper is sent in by 96 reporters, and 256 carrier boys deliver the paper to the doorsteps of both Bloomington and territory town subscribers.

The Pantagraph has received numerous awards designating it as among the country's finest newspapers, and pictures taken by its staff have also received many awards. In 1948 the University of Nebraska School of Journalism presented it with special "Certificate of Award in Newspaper Making" for systematic and painstaking coverage of news in both rural and small city life in the Pantagraph's circulation area.

The Pantagraph is owned today by five great-grandchildren of Jesse Fell, original founder of the paper. Like their illustrious ancestor, they want the paper to continue its campaign to make the world about us a better place in which to live. As The Pantagraph serves its second century we shall undoubtedly see within its pages more campaigns for better farms, better home

and community conditions, better roads and schools, and better government on every level.

#### MCLEAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Seven years before the Illinois Historical Society came into existence, a group of interested persons from McLean County assembled and organized our local historical society. A meeting was arranged for March 12, 1892 by Captain J. H. Burnham and Ezra M. Prince. At this meeting Judge John M. Scott was elected President; John B. Orendorff, Vice-President; Ezra M. Prince, Secretary; George P. Davis, Treasurer; and J. H. Burnham, Chairman of the Executive Committee. The object of the Society as stated in its constitution was "to discover, collect, and preserve whatever relates to the natural, civic, military, literary, and religious history of Illinois in general and McLean County in particular; to maintain a Museum and Library, and extend knowledge upon these subjects by appropriate meetings and publications."

When this society was organized early settlers were yet living who could accurately relate happenings of pioneer days. Papers on a variety of subjects were prepared and read as meetings of the society, with attention given to local history at special meetings held at Orendorff Springs, Dr. Stewart's home in Randolph Grove, Saybrook, Lexington, and Funk's Grove.

McLean County History Society's first publication, Volume I, was known as the War Record of McLean County, in which were listed names of our soldiers and accounts of all previous wars; valuable information concerning civic organizations of the County; and interesting papers and biographies of early settlers.

Volume II, the School History was published in 1903 and gives accounts of our early schools as well as a collection of historical papers and biographies.

The most interesting and valuable of Lincolniana is contained in Volume III, giving proceedings of the May 29, 1900 meeting in Bloomington which commemorated the Republican State Convention of 1856. It was at this convention that Abraham Lincoln made perhaps the greatest address of his life, known as the "lost speech". General John M. Palmer who had presided over the convention was present for the commemoration meeting.

Transactions of the historical society also include Volume IV, published in 1936. A full account of the McLean County Centennial of 1930, the Arrowsmith Battlefield, the old Stewart house, and other items of interest are therein contained.

Publication of Volumes I and II was made possible by the McLean County Board of Supervisors who purchased three hundred copies of each for school libraries of the county. Volume III, the Illinois Republican Convention, was published by the Society at its own expense.

Destruction of the county court house in the fire of 1900 caused the loss of some of the Society's valuable collections but upon completion of the new court house, a large room was assigned to the historical society by the Board of Supervisors. Here relics of early days were assembled—Indian relics, weapons used in our wars, and pictures of pioneers and prominent people of later years. Hundreds of books and manuscripts of historic value were obtained. In 1923 the Museum was moved to its new quarters in the McBarnes Memorial Building, where collections continued to increase. For example, a complete file of the Pantagraph is available. Officers of the society have worked with their limited funds to add to the exhibits, issue publications, and provide maps of historical value.

Each year hundreds of visitors, including groups of school children, are shown through the museum by the custodian. Without question, McLean County has the outstanding museum maintained by any downstate historical society in Illinois.

#### HYBRID SEED CORN

The American Indians carefully buried the corn in a dry cache to be used used for the next season's planting. Likewise, the early settlers and prairie farmers deemed it necessary at husking time to save the best ears for seed. The selected corn was hung where it was dry and safe from rodents. When seed was scarce, it was picked from cribbed corn. Some years later seed corn was selected from the fields and dried out before freezing weather, a method which resulted in better germination.

A grandson of Isaac Funk, Eugene D. Funk, grew up on his father's farm where grain and livestock were raised on a large scale. In 1888 "Gene" entered Yale University where he studied for three years. Instead of completing his fourth year in college, he went to Europe to study agriculture as carried on there. Enthusiastic about what he had seen, Gene returned to McLean County and organized the Funks with their large farms to carry on extensive work in seed improvement. Their first contribution came in 1892, a year that opened with a cold, wet spring. Gene obtained a bushel of an early maturing corn which he planted on June 22. The corn was well matured before frosts.

. The Michigan Station had reported a strange phenomenon, "hybrid vigor", which was a result of crossing two different varieties of open pollinated corn and planting the resulting seed. Gene Funk was interested in this report and sent to a Minnesota Station for an improved early corn. This new strain and Funk's early corn were mixed and from the resulting cross, the Funk ninety-day variety was developed, a strain that proved very popular.

The Funk Brothers Seed Company was organized in 1902 at a time when attention of corn breeders was focused on ear type. Mr. Funk became not only head of the largest commercial seed corn growing concern, but the leading critic of corn selection methods. He recognized that the appearance of an ear was not a guarantee of its seed value. Other seed growers took a stand with him against the then popular rough, starchy corn of late maturity and inferior root development that was taking the blue ribbons in the corn shows. Development of Funk's utility type corn resulted—a smoother, medium dent of faster growth, with firmer and more solid ears. In the next ten years farmers, experiment stations, and farm bureaus endorsed the utility type.

Experiments were continued by Mr. Funk to obtain better strains of corn by using ear-to-row tests. With this method seed from selected ears was planted in separate rows, whereby pollination was controlled by detasseling or using paper sacks. Some interesting results in corn breeding were thus obtained.

In 1914, James Holbert, a young agricultural student in Purdue University, spent his vacation working on the Funk Farms. The young man was greatly pleased with what he saw in the many experiments being carried on for betterment of farm seeds. Mr. Funk was so well satisfied with the interest Jim had shown in their work that after graduation he was invited to assist in the experiments for improving corn. Gene Funk and Jim Holbert, the brilliant young student, made an excellent team to carry on the work.

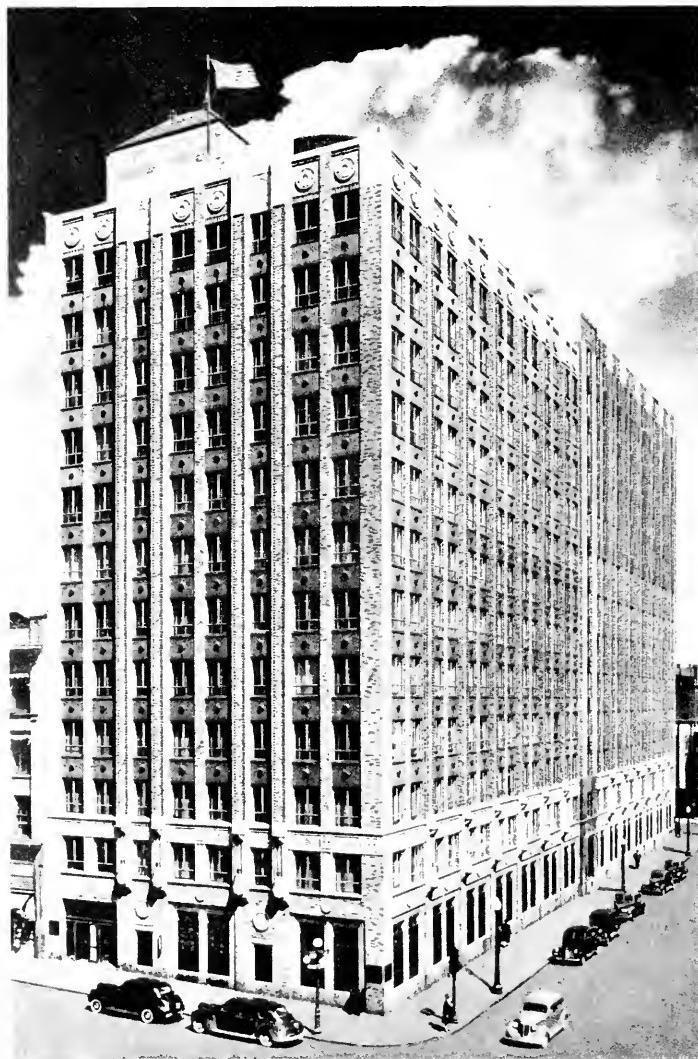
A cross of three Funk varieties produced a hybrid of unusual vigor. Sold in 1916, it was the first hybrid corn to be marketed commercially. However, the lines were not sufficiently inbred and tested to be declared wholly successful. Experiments were conducted on a larger scale with other hybrids being produced. Widespread interest was created and the Funk Farms were visited by interested parties, including Lester Pfister of nearby El Paso, C. L. Gunn of DeKalb, Henry Wallace of Des Moines, and scientists from experiment stations. A double cross hybrid, known as the "Pure Line", was marketed in 1922 and became a leading item with Funk Brothers Seed Company. By 1936 hybrid corn was being planted in all corn growing states. The United States Department of Agriculture cooperated in the study of corn root diseases. Hybrid strains were developed to resist disease and insect pests, defy adverse weather, and the yield was greatly increased over the best open pollinated corn.

The pioneering job was done, but Dr. Holbert continues his search for still better results. Now farmers in the Corn Belt depend on the many hybrid corn dealers, and the Funk Brothers Seed Company market their hybrids throughout the United States and in other countries where corn is grown.

**THE STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANIES**

The largest office building in McLean County is the twelve-story home office building of the State Farm Insurance Companies, located at Washington and East Streets, Bloomington.

The State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company was founded



HOME OFFICE STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANIES  
(Ken-Way Photo)

in 1922 by George J. Mecherle, a native son of McLean County, and has grown to be the world's largest automobile insurance company. It is operated on the same cooperative principle as were Township and County Farm Fire Mutuals of the day.

The State Farm Life Insurance Company was founded in 1929 and the State Farm Fire Insurance Company was established in 1935.

Mr. Mecherle was born June 7, 1877 on the family homestead near Merna, where he was known as a successful farmer and excellent school director. Bloomington and McLean County are proud of Mr. Mecherle, for he can truly be rated as a modern pioneer who found rich fields that had never been worked.

## Section V

# Our County in the Wars

### BLACK HAWK WAR

No record of a conflict on McLean County soil has been made since the terrible battle at Etnataek in 1730. Etnataek was located near Arrowsmith.

Our county was young and only sparcely settled when the Black Hawk War broke out in northern Illinois in 1832. Settlers along the Mackinaw in the eastern part of the county feared an attack not so much from nearby friendly Indians but from the many warriors encamped at Indian Grove (south of Fairbury). As a precaution, a blockhouse was erected south of the trail in Section 13 in Money Creek Township. For added safety, a stockaded fort was built at the Henline Settlement in Section 30 of Lawndale Township. The Patton Cabin at Pleasant Hill and the Cunningham Mill at Cheney's Grove were fortified. Women and children remained in or near these fortifications during the day while the men were at work in the fields. At night all came to these places for protection.

At the outbreak of the war, Captain M. L. Covell and Captain Robert McClure, organized companies and proceeded at once to Dixon's Ferry. The first company under Captain Covell joined Major Stillman's Army which was later defeated by Black Hawk at Stillman's Run thirty miles to the east of Dixon's Ferry. The second company saw no active service. The war was only of short duration as Black Hawk was soon captured.

### MEXICAN WAR

At the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 a mass meeting was held in Bloomington to stir up patriotism and to secure enlistments. General Gridley spoke and urged the boys to go. He was followed by John Moore of Randolph Grove, then Lieutenant Governor of Illinois who stated, "I do not say go; I say come. I am going and say to you all, come with me." The one hundred three who volunteered their services for six months were hauled to Springfield in farm wagons the next day. When they learned that enlistments would only be accepted for one year, some returned home. The company, filled with new men, proceeded to Mexico where they joined the forces of General Zachary Taylor. During the term of service, four of the McLean County soldiers died, sixteen were discharged for disabilities incurred while in

service, and one deserted. The remainder were sent home. They embarked at Vera Cruz for New Orleans where they were mustered out on May 26, 1847. They came by steamboat to Alton, thence, to Peoria, finally ending their long journey by stagecoach from Peoria to Bloomington.

#### CIVIL WAR

After a bombardment lasting two days, Fort Sumter surrendered early in the morning of April 14, 1861. This news came to Bloomington people as they were going to church. Monday, April 15, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers. That evening a mass meeting was held at the court house square. With patriotism running high, a company of 113 men signed up, and one week later they were taken to Springfield over the Chicago and Alton Railroad. This group became Company K of the Eighth Illinois Regiment. Later calls were answered with the same alacrity, and many companies and a few almost completed regiments were made up of young men from this county. One of these regiments was the 33rd Infantry lead by President Hovey of Normal University. This was known as the Normal Regiment, and included many teachers and students from that school. Our county with a population of 28,580 (census of 1860) sent 6,866 to the service during the four years of war, and all but a few were volunteers.

This war was fought in almost the same manner as our previous wars. At the beginning, soldiers on opposite sides would stand out in the open to fight with flintlock muskets or hunting rifles; but in a short time both the North and the South had either purchased or begun the manufacture of improved carbines and muskets. A soldier was no longer regarded as a coward who sought the protection of a tree or rifle pit. Machine guns and long range artillery were not developed enough for this conflict. The armies were supplied by heavy wagons each of which was drawn by two or three teams of horses or mules. The regular rations of the soldiers included coffee, bacon, and hard-tack. The hard-tack was a large, hard baked cracker that readily softened when soaked in hot coffee.

Wounded soldiers received care from surgeons with instruments that frequently caused infections. Modern methods of sterilizing and antiseptics now in use would have saved many lives. The mothers and daughters at home contributed by making bandages, writing letters and preparing gifts to comfort and cheer their sons and brothers in the lonely southland.

It was joyful news, indeed, when word came in April, 1865 that the Confederate Armies had surrendered. The long, hard fought war was over and the soldiers would return to their friends and loved ones. It was at this time that the sentimental song, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," became popular. More songs of a lasting nature were written during this war

period than in any previous or following war. Such songs as, "Battle Hymn of the Republic", "Tenting Tonight", "Just Before the Battle Mother", and "Dixie" are only a few which last in our memory.



HOISTING THE THIRTY-TWO TON GRANITE SHAFT OF THE MCLEAN COUNTY MEMORIAL TO SOLDIERS OF THE CIVIL WAR, March 28, 1913. Jacob Hasbrouck of the Daily Pantagraph in foreground.

No one had forgotten that the ranks of the returning soldiers had been thinned by battle, by disease, and accident, and plans were at once started to erect a memorial to these honored dead. A beautiful marble monument was erected in Franklin Park in 1869. The death-roll carved on this monument contained several hundred names. This memorial stood for a long time but the material was not permanent and it had to be taken down as a matter

of safety. The imposing granite monument at the entrance to Miller Park was erected in 1913 and contains bronze tablets on which are inscribed the names of all soldiers of the Civil War enlisting from McLean County.

The returned soldiers soon resumed their places in business and civic affairs. Many were selected for important positions and their influence in politics was dominant during the half century following.

An organization of Union soldiers, known as the Grand Army of the Republic, was formed at Decatur in 1866. It later became a strong national organization with annual encampments. Their final gathering was held in 1949 with but six veterans present. The only surviving member of the local William T. Sherman Post answered the last roll call in 1940. Their auxiliary organizations, the Woman's Relief Corps, Sons of Veterans, and the Daughters, on each Memorial Day decorate the graves with flags and flowers. They shall continue to keep alive the memories of their heroes of the Civil War.

#### SPANISH AMERICAN WAR AND THE PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION

When the United States declared war on Spain April 25, 1898, McLean County had two companies of militia—a Company D Infantry and a Troop B Cavalry. The latter was immediately divided, recruited into two companies, and the men mustered into service as Troops B and G, First Illinois Volunteer Cavalry. Company D, Fifth Illinois Infantry, was formed from the militia company of the same name. These companies were mustered into service at Springfield and later sent to camps near Chickamauga, Georgia for training.

After the Peace Protocol was signed in August, 1898, our McLean County boys returned. None had taken an active part in the warfare. However, three of our soldiers had died in camp.

In answer to another call, Company G, made up exclusively of colored men, was raised in Bloomington. They joined the Eighth Illinois Volunteer Infantry. This company was sent to Cuba for garrison duty because of so much illness among our soldiers stationed there.

During February of the following year, in 1899, our government took action to suppress the Philippine Insurrection. Several of the soldiers from the Spanish-American War and others from McLean County joined the regular army to help conquer these insurgents. The war involved desperate jungle fighting with many casualties. Some new weapons were used by our soldiers. On March 23, 1901, the insurgent leader, Aguinaldo, was captured and a civil government was established by the United States.

Soldiers who took part in either of these conflicts are now organized as the Spanish War Veterans.

### WORLD WAR I

On April 6, 1917 United States entered the terrible conflict that had been raging in Europe since 1914. Young men from all sections of our country were soon enlisting for overseas service. The Selective Military Conscription Act was signed by President Wilson May 18th. Plans were made to send into training and equip the largest army our nation had ever seen.

Two draft boards were set up in McLean County. These boards inducted 1949 young men during the course of the War. The local militia organization, Company D, was taken into the United States Army. They became affiliated with the 124th Machine Gun Battalion and saw active service in France.

As many more voluntarily entered the service of their country. Men and women on the home front from all walks of life offered their services for the advancement of the various wartime projects. The County Council of Defense was active in promoting employment, supplying farm help, increasing production, and in making various solicitations. The County Food Administration studied and fixed prices. With the aid of the women, the entire county was organized for the food conservation program.

Two thousand boys and girls in 4-H Clubs were enrolled in projects to increase production of food. The Red Cross Chapter of Bloomington extended to every town and village of the county.

A few of the things which the people of McLean County did as their part in this terrible war included:

- Raising more than \$11,000,000 in five liberty loans.
- Giving thirty of the leading physicians to the service of the government in battlefields and in camps.
- Giving a score or more of nurses to succor the wounded and the sick.
- Raising more than \$140,000 in two drives for the Red Cross.
- Enrolling 14,000 men, women and children in the active membership of the Red Cross.

When the news came on November 11, 1918 that the fighting had ceased and an Armistice had been signed, the United War Work Drive started. \$167,000 was raised. The funds were used for several humanitarian projects connected with the war. The organizations participating were:

the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., Knights of Columbus, Jewish Welfare Board, American Library Association, Salvation Army, and others.

Many workers from these groups were sent overseas.

The war had been desperately fought. Poison gas was introduced. Machine gun nests, barbed wire entanglements, and trench warfare with hand

grenades and improved small arms, made the front lines very hazardous. The Germans with their zeppelins had planned to bomb England into submission, but new fighter planes with machine guns soon made the large gas bags obsolete. Airplanes were used mostly for observation and air combats. Few, if any bombs, were dropped on German soil. The destruction of life and property was greater in this war than in any previous conflict.

It was a joyful day, indeed, when the war ended and our boys could return to their homes. Many returned wounded and shattered in health from the terrible ordeal.

A beautiful plaque in the McBarnes Memorial Building bears the names of the 174 McLean County soldiers who did not return.

An organization for soldiers of World War I was started in France in 1917 and called the American Legion. The Louis E. Davis Post No. 56 of Bloomington was organized June 23, 1919. Louis E. Davis was a young Bloomington aviator who was killed as he was completing his bombing course. He was the son of H. O. Davis of the Pantagraph. Other American Legion Posts are:

Ruel Neal Post No. 79 LeRoy  
Redd Williams Post No. 163 Bloomington  
Erwin Martenson Post No. 164 Anchor  
Grant Post No. 202 Bellflower  
Gridley Post No. 218 Gridley  
Ben Roth Post No. 234 Chenoa  
Elmo F. Hill Post No. 291 Lexington  
David Humphrey Daniels Post No. 427 Saybrook  
Burger-Benedict Post No. 573 McLean  
Witt-Weber-Carroll Post No. 617 Arrowsmith  
Dwyer-Smith Post No. 618 Cooksville  
Carl E. Miller Post No. 624 Heyworth  
Carl S. Martin Post No. 635 Normal  
Davis Kerber Post No. 653 Colfax  
Danvers Post No. 732 Danvers  
Marion Lee Miller Post No. 931 Towanda  
Lloyd Fleischer Post No. 1150 Downs

The John H. Krause Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, was organized in Bloomington, June 11, 1920. The membership includes only those who fought overseas. The soldier from Danvers, who enlisted at the beginning of the war and lost his life in France, was honored by this organization using his name.

#### WORLD WAR II

On September 1, 1939 Germany sent an army across the border into Poland and World War II began. Unrestricted submarine warfare had forced

America into the previous war. German tactics were such that it appeared that America was to be drawn into this conflict.

In 1940, the Selective Training and Service Act was passed by Congress and signed by President Roosevelt. It was the first peacetime conscription law in our history, though passed in the shadow of war. Our leaders felt that we should prepare for what seemed to be a grave danger.

Japan declared war on the United States December 7, 1941, but before the news reached this country the Japanese had made the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor. America declared war on Japan the following day. A declaration of war against Germany and Italy followed December 11th. Our military forces were at once sent against our enemy in the Pacific.

The three Selective Service Boards of our county inducted 4,284 men into military service. Our local militia, Company D, Fifth Illinois Infantry, was again taken into the regular army. The drafted men were sent in small groups to training camps for various types of modern warfare. Many young men voluntarily enlisted in some branch of the service of their own choosing. A lesson from World War I had prompted the training of reserve officers, who were of great assistance in organizing our new army.

The Red Cross was the first civic group to go into action. With their experience in the previous war and local disasters, they were better able to give aid to the enlisted men at distant battle fronts, in prison camps, and comfort their relatives.

The McLean County War Price and Rationing Board was established January 5, 1942 with Dana Rollins as chairman. During the five years of its existence, thirty-eight individuals served as members on the board and each contributed many hours of service. The work of this group was felt in every home of the county. Items that were scarce and important to the war effort were allocated or rationed to individuals according to their needs or the particular use of the article. The purchase of automobiles, tires, gasoline, kerosene, sugar, and many other things, were supervised by this board. They also issued four different War Ration Books for groceries, sugar and shoes. This board was active until the close of the war. Though the plan was new and sometimes appeared harsh, it really worked.

From the very onset of the war many civic groups willingly promoted drives to sell bonds or collect much needed scrap metal, waste paper, and fats to aid in the war effort. The Illinois War Council had successfully organized cities and towns on protective measures against possible air raids or other disasters. A civilian organization was needed to mobilize workers to assist in salvage campaigns, war bond drives, conservation efforts and other wartime services as needed. Mayor Mark Hayes, Chairman of the Bloomington

Defense Council, appointed Hudson Burr on June 14, 1943 as head of the Citizens Service Corps. Mr. Burr reorganized the workers and established the Volunteer Defense Office. The work was later coordinated to include every town and precinct in the county. The defense and protective services were supervised by regular law enforcement officers. The war service corps was provided with a chairman for each of the different activities. Important among these were: War Savings and Bonds, Salvage, Ration Boards, Victory Gardens, Transportation, Libraries, Nutrition, Child Care, Health and Hospital, and Recreation. The many drives for funds and the carrying on of the various projects required thousands of volunteer workers. These helpers came from homes, offices, schools, farms, stores and factories. Organized groups came from the Farm Bureau, Home Bureau, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Teachers and office workers also gave much of their time, often at a personal sacrifice, toward the ultimate success of the Civilian Defense Program.

Now the entire world was submerged in the worst war of all time. Large armies were equipped with the most improved death dealing weapons. Soldiers were moved in large speedy trucks or by transport planes. Huge tanks and heavy long distance bombers were perfected. The navy added airplane carriers and types of landing craft never before in use. The magic eye of radar was brought into service.

On November 7, 1942 our armies long in training, suddenly began landing at several points on the north shores of Africa. After severe fighting in the African Campaign in which the enemy was defeated, the armies crossed over into Italy on September 3, 1943. On June 6, 1944, known as D-Day, the allied forces made a successful landing in Normandy on the coast of France. The American troops crossed the Rhine on March 23, 1945. The Germans signed an unconditional surrender agreement on May 6th which is called V-E Day.

Japan surrendered formally to the Allies aboard the battleship, Missouri, on September 1, (September 2 Tokyo time). September 2, 1945 was proclaimed V-J Day.

When our boys from McLean County came home, the Veterans Administration promptly came to their aid with their rehabilitation program. Pensions, hospitalization, life insurance, employment, education, and housing were listed among the major contributions of this organization. The returned soldier felt that the government was attempting to solve his postwar problems. This had not been done in previous wars. Of the hundreds of men from our county who entered the service, scores were disabled and two hundred and fifty lost their lives. Veterans of this war are joining the American Legion,

Veterans of Foreign Wars, and a new organization known as the American Veterans of World War II (Amvets).

Never before had women taken such an active part in war. Besides their extensive program on the home front, they enlisted many in the two new organizations—the WACS and the WAVES. The Women's Marine Corps again operated as in the previous war.

Today, more than five years since the close of the war, we find an unsettled world. It was our hope that McLean County would be living in a peaceful world. But at the opening of the New Year of 1951, our political leaders, faced by ruthless and selfish dictators, are confused. However, they feel that more warfare and destruction will be required to salvage civilization, if civilization is to be saved.

## Section VI

# Schools in McLean County

### COUNTY SCHOOLS

*Pioneer Schools:* Early settlers who came to the groves of McLean County had an abiding faith in their Creator. Many came from pioneer settlements in other states where need for some form of schooling was apparent. Subscription schools were soon opened here in cabin homes, wherever there was a number of children in need of teaching, with parents willing to pay a set amount for each child.

The Illinois Legislature passed a law in 1825 to establish free schools, but the citizens of the state could not understand why they should be taxed to provide education for other people's children. This opposition to the law developed to such an extent that the tax provision was repealed at the next session of the legislature two years later.

After 1837 a state school fund was created by interest on sale of public lands and distributed to the schools of the state on the basis of pupil attendance as evidenced by schedules which teachers kept. Similarly, interest from the sale of the sixteenth section and income from the sixteenth section comprised the Township School Fund which was distributed on the same basis as the State Fund. These small amounts could be bolstered by money from local taxation (15c on the \$100 assessed valuation of real estate if approved by two-thirds of the voters). In most instances only a part of the cost of maintaining schools was thus raised, so early log schools were built by personal contributions and not only housed the school but were used for religious meetings and neighborhood gatherings. Pioneers deserve much praise for their interest and liberality in maintaining the early schools.

*Free School Law of 1855:* Until 1850 settlements were in the woodlands of McLean County but with the advent of the steel plow for breaking the tough prairie sod, reapers becoming available to harvest the grain, and railroads providing accelerated transportation of farm products to markets, there was a rapid movement of farmers to the open prairies. 1855 brought the free school law with the provision that townships could organize school districts with elected boards of directors who had the power to levy taxes for building

school houses and hiring teachers. In a few years new school buildings dotted the landscape of the entire county.

*State School Fund:* At that time the interest that made up the State School Fund was supplemented by a two-mill tax on all assessed real estate which was levied annually until 1872 when the Legislature made a yearly appropriation for the State School Fund of one million dollars each year. The amount was increased to two million dollars in 1911 and it was doubled in 1915, providing four million dollars annually to "aid" schools in the state. This sum, plus the interest on sale of public lands, remained constant until 1929 when the Legislature again voted to increase annual aid to schools to \$10,000,000. In addition to financially assisting school districts, this money also had various local uses: All or part of the salary of the County Superintendent of Schools was paid from the fund since 1889; for a time tuition of high school pupils living outside organized high school districts was also paid from this revenue; and, in later years, these funds were withheld from school districts not meeting standard requirements.

A state law of 1923 set closer restrictions on the distribution of these moneys by granting additional state aid to districts employing better trained and experienced teachers, with special aid granted to districts of low assessed valuation or unusually large enrollments. At present to qualify for state funds, a school must be recognized by the state as having well trained teachers, good equipment, and more than six pupils in average daily attendance during the school year. State aid continues to increase in importance for in 1948 an annual appropriation of \$33,000,000 was made for educational purposes, and an all time high of about \$50,000,000 was set aside for distribution to Illinois schools in 1949. At present the money for state aid comes from part of the 2% sales or occupational tax in Illinois.

*Teacher Qualifications:* Teachers of pioneer schools did not have to meet any legal requirements. Parents willingly signed subscription lists for prospective teachers who came to the settlement seeking jobs—many were young men from the East who conducted excellent schools. When the state fund was created in 1837, teachers who kept schedules and had passed the examination given by the school trustees received additional pay. Abraham Lincoln presented the following resolution to the State Legislature in 1840, "Resolved, that the Committee on Education be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing a law for the examination as to their qualifications of persons offering themselves as school teachers, that no teacher should receive any part of the public school funds who shall not have passed such examination." Five years later Mr. Lincoln's suggestion was enacted into state law, whereby teaching certificates were granted to persons of good moral

character who could properly teach Orthography, Reading in English, Penmanship, Arithmetic, English Grammar, Modern Geography, and the History of the United States. These examinations were conducted by the County School Commissioner who issued certificates to successful candidates. In 1867 the Commissioner was replaced by the County Superintendent of Schools who likewise handled certification of teachers in a worthy manner. By 1870 many local young people with high school or a few weeks of Normal School training qualified as teachers, while, in the better rural schools, groups of young people were prepared to take the teachers' examinations. In 1914 a new law created the Illinois State Examining Board for Teachers' County Certificates, which prepared questions, graded papers, and otherwise cooperated with county superintendents of schools in licensing the teachers. Certificates to teach in the elementary schools were issued to persons who successfully passed the examination, or they were granted without examination to those who had one year of training in a recognized Normal School. Under these rulings, many bright young people were encouraged to enter the teaching profession and the supply was greater than the demand. In 1929 certificates were issued without examination to high school graduates who completed two years of Normal School, or those with one year of professional training were permitted to take an examination. This law did not appear to discourage those really interested in being teachers. At the demand of certain educational groups, soon the Legislature was calling for high school graduates to secure four years of professional training without examination before they were qualified to teach. Only persons who had completed two years of work in a recognized teacher training institution were permitted to take the teachers' examination. Enacted into law in 1941 at a time when World War II was getting under way, these increased requirements plus the "easy money" in lines of work with little preparation discouraged young people from entering the teaching profession and resulted in a critical shortage of good teachers, a condition which still exists. Illinois is one of many states yet issuing emergency certificates to people who will accept teaching positions—persons without any or as much training as deemed necessary two decades or more ago.

*Courses of Study:* Learning in early schools was largely a matter of following the textbooks for no one had heard of a course of study. In 1885 John A. Miller, then County Superintendent of McLean County Schools, issued the first course of study for rural and village schools, a publication which outlined a definite program and plan of promotion for pupils. The county office issued monthly examinations on the work outlined and final tests were given to upper grade pupils to determine their fitness for an elementary diploma to begin life's work or enter a high school. The first Illinois Course of Study

was adopted in 1889 and was revised at times to conform to newer laws and better practices in teaching. With the last revision coming in 1925, county school superintendents of the state in 1935 requested the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to again revise the course of study or prepare a new one. Without delay the Superintendent appointed a curriculum committee to study needs of schools and to prepare what would best serve as an outline of work and classroom procedures. By 1940 four bulletins were issued, following many conferences and discussions by educators throughout Illinois. These curriculum guides were not practical for all schools and had not met the original demand for a revised course of study, so in 1946 elementary schools were provided with a publication, entitled the *Illinois Curriculum and Course of Study Guide*, prepared and issued by the office of Vernon L. Nickell, Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction. This offering more nearly meets the needs of elementary education but many feel that the schools should yet follow a more definite teaching program in order to equip our boys and girls with the minimum essentials.

*Textbooks and Teaching Aids:* Teaching aids and standard textbooks were unheard of in pioneer schools. Not long after the free school law of 1855 went into effect, quill pens, home-made ink, crude hand-built furniture, and painted blackboards gave way to factory made products, but the sheepskin erasers and hickory sticks lingered for some time. Since school directors had the authority to select the textbooks for their schools, they were besieged by agents offering the latest in books, maps, and globes. In 1895 County Superintendent of Schools John S. Wren called a conference of directors to discuss a uniform county book list to be submitted to the many rural and village districts for their adoption. This plan was approved, and, with the exception of a few larger towns the list recommended by the county superintendent has been followed.

*School Improvements:* With the appointment of U. J. Hoffman as Rural School Supervisor of Illinois by Francis G. Blair, Superintendent of Public Instruction, plans and suggestions for the betterment of Illinois country schools was soon forthcoming. Then came the era of Standard Schools—those which met state requirements in heating, lighting, ventilation, equipment (furniture and teaching aids), water supply, and toilets. Fifty-one McLean County schools were on the standard list by 1912.

The State Legislature passed a Sanitation Law in 1917, requiring the county superintendents of schools to order certain funds withheld from districts that failed to meet requirements for a standard school. This law with "teeth" soon brought all schools in McLean County up to standard. In 1937 a plan was put into effect by the state office calling for the recognition of

schools with much the same requirements as those for standard schools, except that a large number of points toward recognition could be earned by the employing of teachers with training in recognized teacher training institutions or experience. Better equipped schools were rated as superior. A modification of this plan is in effect today in Illinois and an increase in the state supervisory staff permits annual visitation of a majority of the elementary schools of the state, in addition to the required annual visits by the county superintendents.

*Games and Recreation:* Games played in rural schools in early days at recesses and noons included bull pen, drop the handkerchief, duck on the rock, dare base, black man, steal clothes, London bridge, one-eyed cat, peg and awl, ante over, jack stones, crack the whip, hide and go seek, baseball, farmer in the dell, and leap frog. If you do not know how to play them, ask your mother or grandmother. These games required little or no materials, while elementary school children of today are usually furnished with such equipment as teeter totters, swings, slides, jungle gyms, and merry-go-rounds. Play is now supervised as required by law by trained physical education teachers.

*High Schools:* Training beyond the "fifth reader" was seldom undertaken by teachers of pioneer schools, though the practice of offering "higher school" work, in such subjects as the teacher was prepared to teach, was common in early schools of the county. Smaller towns and villages frequently offered two or three year high school courses under one teacher with no definite standards. In 1912 J. C. Hanna was appointed State High School Visitor and it was not long until there were certain requirements for recognition of high schools by the State of Illinois. Included were teacher training in subjects to be taught by that teacher, a course of study, teaching helps, laboratory equipment, and libraries. For many years young people living in rural districts attended nearby high schools, paying their own tuition, until a law was passed requiring each common school district to pay tuition of all high school pupils residing in it. Objection from taxpayers resulted in the enactment of another law, requiring county superintendents to pay high schools for non-resident pupils from the distributive fund (state aid). Districts maintaining high schools then objected, so a Non-High School Act became effective in 1917 whereby all territory not included in districts maintaining four-year high schools was organized into a district for taxing purposes, revenue from which paid tuition of pupils residing therein.

Under the Township High School Act, Bellflower Township High School was organized in 1905. The Community High School Act of 1919 designated that high school territory in one or more townships could be organized into

a community high school district. Modern high school buildings were then erected in many towns of the county with the result that high school attendance increased from 1807 in 1917 to 2782 in 1927. Visitors from the University of Illinois now work with the state examiners in inspecting and approving the high schools for recognition and accrediting in the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, thus permitting graduates of these schools to enter colleges and universities unchallenged by an entrance examination. Likewise the course of study or curriculum of the modern McLean County high schools was broadened to include vocational subjects and well-rounded college entrance preparation. The Illinois State Examining Board ruled that high school teachers have bachelor's degrees and that they be prepared in the subject or subjects they were to teach. High schools now often required a master's degree of applicants for teaching positions, while principals, superintendents, and supervisors now being employed must have a master's degree.

*Reorganization of Schools:* Though one-room schools were serving adequately in the early training of boys and girls and were serving as the center of neighborhood social life, frequently muddy roads for many years prevented any possible transportation to distant centers if larger units were organized. Nevertheless, consolidation of rural schools in Illinois was often discussed with many plans for reorganization of the school system being brought before the State Legislature. The McLean County School Survey Committee was voted into existence in 1945, following enactment of a state law. This committee's purpose was to study the two hundred thirty one-room schools of McLean County with a view of making recommendations for suitable reorganization. It was found that many schools had been closed because of the acute teacher shortage or for the lack of children to attend them. Buildings, too, were in need of extensive repair. An effective written report to the citizens of the county overcame opposition to school consolidation with the results that unit districts to include grades one through twelve were organized in many sections of McLean County, while some village elementary schools banded with surrounding rural schools to form community consolidated schools. Transportation by school buses on vastly improved county roads is the present vogue. Many unused one-room buildings have been sold at public auction, so that today finds all but a few little district schoolhouses vanished—torn down, moved away, or remodelled on the site as a dwelling. Our larger units have yet to prove themselves as providing better training for our youth, as the school story is incomplete. Citizens of McLean County are constantly seeking for ways and means to improve existing conditions and provide facilities that will make our school system second to none in the nation.

*MOUNT HOPE TOWNSHIP 22N - 1W*

This township occupies the southwestern corner of the county. The surface is undulating, but not hilly, except for a small area in Johnson's Grove. The eastern branch of Sugar Creek flows across the entire township; and another branch of the Creek cuts through the township's northwest corner.

The earliest settlements were established on the western edge of Funk's Grove. Later, others were made in Johnson's Grove. The Providence Emigrating Society located about twenty sections in the southern half of the township. Fifteen families were brought here from Massachusetts and Rhode Island, in 1837. First schools of the township were taught in cabin homes of these sturdy settlers. The village of Mt. Hope was platted and named for Mt. Hope, Rhode Island. Many disadvantages of settling on the prairies of Illinois caused some of the colonists to return to their eastern homes, and others to move farther west. In 1853, the village of Mt. Hope had a church and school, as well as a few residents. When the railroad was laid three miles to the east of Mt. Hope, the village was soon abandoned. Stations for the "Underground Railroad" were maintained here. During the Civil War, many refugees also came to this section to establish homes. Individuals from the refugee group and descendants of the Rhode Island settlers have given this township many interesting and valuable citizens.

Ebenezer Church was established in the early 1870s; and another Methodist church was near the Mt. Hope School.

**MCLEAN SCHOOL (5\*) No. 1**

The village of McLean was platted in 1856. As the population increased, the question of a school arose. The nearest school was Mt. Hope, three miles west. Some of the older children walked that distance to attend. In February of 1857, the old church and school building of the Rhode Island Colony was presented to the people of McLean for a school and a place for meetings. Citizens, aided by farmers and twenty-four yoke of oxen, moved the building to the lot south of the present Methodist Church (Lot 4, block 25). Josephine Merriam taught a subscription school there the following summer.

School District No. 5 was laid out and organized in 1858. Because of the

\*NOTE: Figures in parentheses are original numbers of districts within the townships. The other numbers are those assigned in 1902 when all districts in the County were renumbered.

Much information concerning schools prior to 1903 is found in Transactions of the McLean County Historical Society, Volume 2.



MOORE'S MILL, 1917, west of McLean. Grinding began in 1843 and continued until 1913.

increased enrollment, it was soon necessary to rent an extra room. In 1864 another one-room house (18'x26'), costing \$409.42, was added. At an election in 1867, the present site for the school was selected. In the spring of 1868 a two-story, four-room building was nearing completion, when a tornado completely wrecked it. The contractors, undismayed, completed the school in time for opening of the fall term. This beautiful, well-constructed school, costing \$7373.53, was used for both grades and high school. It was the pride of the village until noon on December 18, 1883, when it was totally destroyed by fire. The next week school was resumed with grammer and high school departments meeting in Wagner's Hall, and intermediate and primary grades in Leach's Hall. The next summer a building, similar to the old one, was erected at a cost of \$5,817. In 1901 and 1902, the inside was entirely remodeled in order to provide room for an extra teacher. Kept in excellent repair, this building served the district more than thirty-two years, until it also was destroyed by fire. In October of 1917 empty stores and halls were again used as classrooms.

The present one-story brick school was completed the next year, at a cost of \$25,000. It was the most convenient and modern elementary school building in the county at that time. The directors consistently employed good

teachers and supplied the school with modern equipment. McLean Grade School was consolidated with six rural schools in McLean County and two in Logan County in 1947, as Community Consolidated District No. 424.

#### MCLEAN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 355

McLean citizens voted to establish a high school under the 1917 Act. The Illinois Supreme Court, however, declared that law invalid. McLean Community High School was organized on July 12, 1919, the first high school in the state to be approved under a new law. The beautiful building, costing \$130,000, was then erected at the west edge of town. An excellent high school program has been maintained. On January 18, 1947, bonds to the amount of \$120,000 were voted for further improvements.

#### Mt. HOPE SCHOOL (2) No. 2

A settlement known as the "Rhode Island Colony" was started in 1837. The N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 4 was surveyed and platted for a village site. The village was named for Mt. Hope, Rhode Island. Mrs. Pierce and others taught subscription schools of the village in their log cabin homes.

In the 1840s a frame building was erected on the west side of the quarter section. Pupils sat on long benches extending across the room, with an aisle down the center of the room. Schoolbooks were stored in drawers under long bench desks. The early building, which was also used for the Congregational Church services, was later moved to McLean. Mt. Hope School District was organized in 1859. Containing twelve and one-fourth sections, it has been the largest rural district with a one-room school in the county.

In the early 1860s the recent house three miles west of McLean at the northeast corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 32 was erected. The school was made standard in 1920; and a basement and a furnace were installed later. Reunions at the Mt. Hope School were held regularly by pioneers of this district. Following consolidation with McLean Grade School, the house was sold in 1948.

Moore's Mill to the west of the school was built in 1842.

#### NEW KENTUCKY SCHOOL (3) No. 3

Since many residents of this district were from Kentucky, it was suggested that the school be named *New Kentucky*. The road in front of the school was often called "Kentucky Street". Pupils from this section attended a school in Tazewell County until the 1860s, when the present house was erected on the east side of Section 19. The school was remodeled and standardized in 1920. It was always well-supported. In 1947 the territory was included in the McLean Consolidation. The New Kentucky school house was sold in 1948.

## RABBIT HILL SCHOOL (6) No. 4

In 1865 a schoolhouse was built on the southwest corner of Section 22. Because the brushy region, southeast of this site, was a great place for rabbits, the school and the neighborhood were always known as *Rabbit Hill*. In 1870 Rabbit Hill School District lost territory from the east side to School District No. 11, but gained area to the north and west. The school was then moved to the southeast corner of Section 16, more nearly the center of the district. A few years later this house burned; and the recent building was erected. This district is now a part of the McLean Consolidated School District. The schoolhouse was sold in 1948.



RABBIT HILL SCHOOL, District No. 4, 1933. Elsie Naffziger, teacher.

## FUNK-STUBBLEFIELD SCHOOL (4, 11) No. 5

District No. 4, consisting of eight and one-half sections, was organized in 1859. A schoolhouse in the field, near the center of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 11, was reached by a road crossing the creek from the east. It was called *Stubblefield* School because the district contained many families named Stubblefield.

In 1870 District No. 11 was organized, taking two sections from the south of No. 4, two from Rabbit Hill, and some from McLean. A house was built near the northeast corner of Section 23 across from the Jacob Funk residence. Mr. Funk later owned the entire district. In 1899 Districts No. 4 and No. 11

were united and named *Funk-Stubblefield*. The school building was erected on the northwest corner of Section 13. The house and grounds were improved and standardized in 1917. Excellent school equipment was always provided. After the district merged with the McLean Consolidated School in 1947, the schoolhouse was sold at public auction in 1948.

#### OHIO SCHOOL (9) No. 6

The schoolhouse, located in the northeast corner of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 9, was known as *Ohio*, since a number of families from the "Buckeye state" had located in this section. The school was reached by a donated road, two rods wide, leading from the road to the west. In 1907 a scarcity of pupils caused the school to be closed. The school trustees united the Ohio District with Trott School District No. 7 in 1909.

#### TROTT SCHOOL (8) No. 7

The recent building was constructed in the early 1860s on a small site donated by Isaac C. Trott, a prominent citizen. In 1859 the district, consisting of but two and one-half sections, was organized. It was a very small district until 1909, when the trustees dissolved Ohio District No. 6, and added it to the Trott District. The schoolhouse was remodelled and made standard in 1918. Enrollment dwindled and Trott District was consolidated with Stanford in 1946.

#### FUNKS GROVE TOWNSHIP 22N-1E

This township is located second from the west in the lower tier of townships. The surface is moderately rolling with excellent drainage into Prairie Creek and the eastern branches of Sugar Creek. The Kickapoo crosses the southeast corner with a few attendant hills. The prairie soil of the entire township is rich silt loam. The original timber area known as Funk's Grove covered about five sections with large and beautiful trees. Isaac Funk settled at the east side of the grove in 1824. He and his illustrious family have had the spotlight in many interests for more than a century. From the early production and marketing of livestock on a large scale to the scientific development of present-day agriculture, the Funks have been outstanding leaders. Numbered among the members of the family have been senators, congressmen, mayors, town officials, and civic workers.

When the school section (No. 16) was offered for sale in 1834, the lots in timber sold for around \$3.50 per acre. The portion on the prairie had no bidders, so it was sold two years later at \$1.00 to \$2.00 per acre. This is an example of the low value placed on the prairie land at that time.

#### BENJAMIN F. FUNK CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL (11½) No. 401

In 1912 territory was detached from Districts No. 10, 11, and 13 and



GIANT VIRGIN OAK, FUNK'S GROVE, 1917. Too large to saw but made eight hundred fence posts. C. H. Robinson counted four hundred thirty-five annual rings.

attached to District No. 12. Frank H. Funk had donated three acres for a new school site. The new school was to be named The *Benjamin F. Funk* School, in honor of Frank's father. A new building was erected, with two classrooms, work rooms in the basement, and an assembly hall above. The general cost was \$5000. In 1914 additional territory was taken from District No. 11; and in 1915 a new district was organized, including District No. 12 and what remained of District No. 11. This new district was numbered 11½. In 1919, two years of high school work were offered. In 1920 a vote approved the organizing of a consolidated school and the including of District No. 13. An addition was built, costing \$40,000, including classrooms and gymnasium and the same year a three-year high school course was added. Transportation was handled with much difficulty, until 1930 when most of the roads were graveled. Benjamin F. Funk Consolidated School District joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948. The school continues for grades one to eight, and serves as a fine community center.



LAKE SCHOOL, District No. 8, 1918. Ferne Baker, teacher.

#### LAKE SCHOOL (9) No. 8

The first school in this district was called *Jones School* for Lewis Jones who came from Kentucky. During the Civil War Mr. Jones went back to Kentucky, bought two car loads of whiskey and stored it in a warehouse at McLean. The whiskey sold at twenty-five cents per gallon, except what the natives stole by boring holes in the barrels for long straws. With the proceeds of this sale, Mr. Jones purchased one-half section of land, and lost all but the forty acres at the southwest corner of Section 35, on which the school was located. Later this land was sold to Charles Lake; and a schoolhouse was built about 1868. It was remodeled in 1917 and improved again in 1938. Lake District petitioned into the Benjamin F. Funk Consolidated School in 1939. The site was then vacated. The schoolhouse was moved to Grassy Ridge, District No. 79, where the school had burned in 1940.

#### LONGWORTH SCHOOL (3) No. 9

Longworth School District was organized in 1865, when it consisted of nine sections. A schoolhouse was built on the hill, one-half mile north of the recent site, and was moved to the new location on the southeast corner one and three-fourths miles east of McLean, when the Tile Factory District was organized in 1873. Mr. A. T. Longworth, who gave the site, was a school director for more than fifty years. Through the years, the house was kept

in good repair, with alterations for standardization being made in 1919. This district petitioned to join the McLean Grade School District No. 1 in 1945.

#### TILE FACTORY SCHOOL (8) No. 10

This district, organized in 1873, consisted of six sections from the north side of Longworth School District No. 3. A schoolhouse was built on a site on the north side of the old state road near the tile factory, hence the name. Some years later, the school building was lengthened to the north. In 1929 an addition on the south end provided coat rooms and an entrance to the new basement. It was standardized in 1917. The school was well equipped to handle the rather large enrollment. Consolidated with McLean in 1947, Tile Factory Schoolhouse was sold at public auction in 1948.

#### FREMONT SCHOOL (6) No. 262

District No. 6, including eight sections, was organized in 1866. A frame schoolhouse near the recent house at the southwest corner of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 10 (21N) faced north. It was called *Frisby School* for Jonathan Frisby who lived to the west. A new house built in 1872 has been known as *Fremont School* for some unknown reason. Since other districts took much of the original territory of this district, an addition of territory from DeWitt County helped maintain No. 6. The school was standardized in 1922, and an addition to the front of the building was completed in 1929. This district boasted an interested community organization. McLean included Fremont District when the Consolidated School was effected in 1947. The house was sold in 1948.

#### McILVAIN SCHOOL (4) No. 11

In 1865 McIlvain District, composed of eight and one-half sections, built a schoolhouse at the half section line of Section 26. In 1869 territory to the south was detached for the Fremont District. While the house was being moved one mile north in 1870, a breakdown halted the work forty-nine rods south of the corner. The house was pulled in on an eighth acre site, on the east side but in 1887 the lot was enlarged to two-thirds of an acre. Thus the building stood on the land of Robert A. McIlvain for whom the school was named. For many years the school served as an interesting community center. In 1912 twelve hundred and forty-five acres were detached for the new Benjamin F. Funk School; and in 1914 two hundred and nineteen acres were petitioned out of this district. The ill feeling manifested led to the union of the remainder of the district with the new district in 1915. The abandoned school building was rented as a dwelling for several years.



MCLEAN COUNTY'S FIRST PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION, 1917.

#### MOBERLY SCHOOL (1) No. 12

In Benjamin F. Funk's pasture near the center of Section 10, north of Sugar Creek, a small schoolhouse was built in 1875 for Moberly District. Trails across the fields from different directions provided access to the school. Cattle and hogs roamed around the building. James Moberly, the foreman on the Funk land, lived across the creek to the south. The school was abandoned in 1912, when the Benjamin F. Funk Consolidated School began to organize with this district.

#### FUNK'S GROVE SCHOOL (2) No. 13

Funk's Grove School was the first school in the township. A log house erected in 1827 served the community as a church and schoolhouse for many years. In 1847 a frame schoolhouse was built on the same site. In 1865, when the township was divided into four districts of nine sections each, the school was transferred to a new frame house, located about thirty rods east of the center and on the south side of Section 5. This house burned in 1870, but it was rebuilt and moved in 1875 to the west side of the state road, to a hill on the north side of what was the Isaac Walton League Park. In 1895 the road was rerouted through Funk's Grove Station, so the schoolhouse was moved to the east side of the new road to a site near the northwest corner

of Section 9. There school was conducted until 1920, when the district was consolidated with District No. 401.

#### *RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP 22N-2E*

Gardner Randolph, for whom this township is named, settled here in 1823. The timber, high land, and running water attracted settlers seeking homes; and the beautifully timbered area, comprising about ten sections, was completely inhabited by 1845. The prairie lands were fertile and rolling enough for good drainage. The Kickapoo, passing diagonally across the township furnished the power for several mills. Lytleville was a thriving village and a contender for the county seat in 1830 when McLean County was organized. Later the town had a population of one hundred and served as a trading center for dry goods, groceries, whiskey, and sawed lumber. The early post offices were in Randolph Grove and Lytleville. Later a tavern and post office was located down the stage route (Waynesville Road) in the Short Point neighborhood.

Some time before the town of Heyworth was platted in 1858, a store and post office called Enterprise had been established about a mile west. Much credit is due Campbell Wakefield in locating Heyworth, named for a director of the Illinois Central Railroad. Having donated twenty acres of land to the Illinois Central Railroad Company, Wakefield platted the village. The depot was built there instead of some distance north, where another site, called Bishop, had been surveyed. Randolph Township had many citizens prominent in public affairs, including Lieutenant Governor John Moore, Dr. Harrison Noble, Dr. A. E. Stewart, Major McFarland, and Isaac Van Ordstrand.

#### *HEYWORTH SCHOOL (9, 1) No. 16*

The community of Heyworth has had a greater variety and multiplicity of schools than any similar area in the county. The first was a log school built north of the Jesse Funk home more than a mile east of town in the 1830s. A large fire place, a puncheon floor, and very crude furniture were a part of this primitive school. The second was held in a double cabin that had been vacated by Campbell Wakefield. In 1845 a term of school was taught in a large barn just east of town near the Wakefield residence. Mr. Funk then moved a frame house to the edge of the timber about a mile east of the barn school. This was the fourth school and it was used for some time. Meanwhile other subscription schools were started north of town, first at the Cisco cabin and later in a frame house located on the Noble land. In 1853 a frame building was erected about a quarter of a mile west of the present city limits on the Van Ordstrand farm. It was known as the *Locust Grove School*. A few years later the *Reeder School* was located at the west end of this farm

some distance to the south. The Locust Grove School was then moved to the east side of town to the Willis residence site for the use of School District No. 9. School District No. 1, which included the west part of the new town, built a one-room school in 1862 across from and west of the present Christian Church, when the Reeder school was abandoned. The two districts were united in 1866 as Heyworth District No. 1. After the present site was obtained, a two-story, four-room building was constructed at a cost of \$5000 and the two one-room schools were sold. A few years later the remainder of the block to the east was obtained for a playground, and two lots in the northeast corner, including the old Presbyterian Church, were purchased for a primary school.

In March of 1867 the Illinois State Legislature reorganized this territory as Heyworth Special Charter District, then numbered two. The charter provided for a board of education of seven members called directors. At the end of five years the first member's term would expire; after that one would expire each year. The following were named as directors in the charter: General R. G. Laughlin, Honorable Harrison Noble, Alpheus Millinner, Samuel Hill, Isaac Van Ordstrand, Francis M. Philbrook, and Jonathan Kelly. Authorized to conduct school not less than six or more than eight months per year, the directors might also assess the pupils after six months. The new board soon organized a grade school. Young men returned from the Civil War were given an opportunity to take up or to complete various subjects. High school work, including algebra, natural sciences, and rhetoric, was started about 1876, and two years later the first high school class was graduated. School was in session four months in the winter and two in the summer. The brick school, now used for the grades, was built in 1898 at a cost of \$14,000. The building was much overcrowded when the community High School District No. 377 was organized on November 1, 1919. The new high school building, completed in 1922, has had a beneficent effect upon the entire community. Outstanding parent-teacher groups have functioned at Heyworth for many years and the school spirit has been excellent. The Heyworth Community Unit District No. 4, including the Benjamin Funk School and about twelve rural districts, was organized in 1948. \$140,000, was voted in 1950 to enlarge and modernize the elementary building.

#### FAIRVIEW SCHOOL (5) No. 14

In the early 1860s, this territory was for the most part included in District No. 2. Heyworth District was organized in 1867, taking territory from the east side of Fairview District, then No. 2. Territory was also lost on the north to Bloomingdale, but a strip was gained on the west from Funk's Grove township. Organized as District No. 5, the school unit authorized the build-

ing of a schoolhouse on the David Davis land on a hill east of the recent location three miles west of Heyworth. Known as the *Davis School*, but sometimes called *Mud Creek School* for the little stream to the west, it was moved to the recent site. In 1917 the house was remodeled to comply with the sanitation law. Of late years it was called *Fairview School*. The school was well equipped. It joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.

#### SHORT POINT SCHOOL (8) No. 15

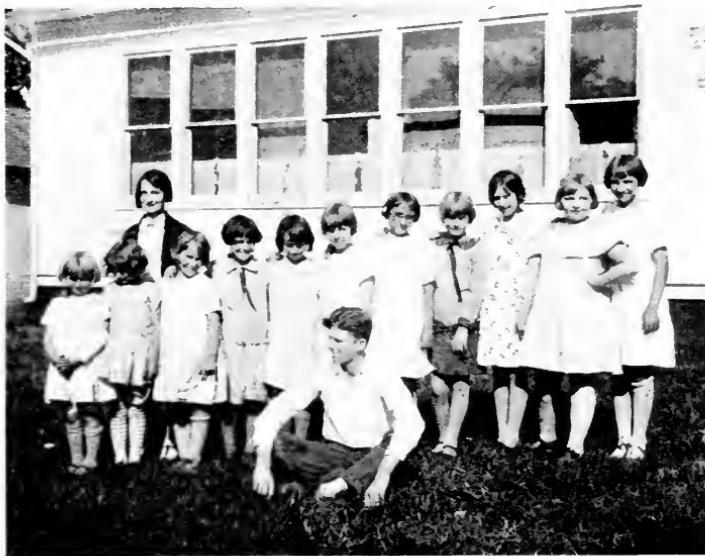
At a meeting at Reeder School on September 6, 1859, the following were elected school directors: James T. Walton for three years, John Stockdale for two years, S. J. Reeder for one year. On September 10th the directors met and levied a one per cent tax to build a schoolhouse. Agreeable to previous notice, the legal voters met at the old schoolhouse on September 30th to locate the new house. They decided upon the northwest corner acre of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8 (21N) on the farm of H. J. Short on the Waynesville Road. On October 10th at the home of James T. Walton, it was decided to build. Contract for the building was awarded to Thomas D. Messick, \$66 for the schoolhouse and \$15 for seats and desks.

December 3, 1859, S. J. Reeder was employed to teach at \$25 per month, and on September 3, 1860 was elected a school director for three years. On August 3, 1861, there was no election, because there was no attendance of electors, "consequently John Stockdale will hold his office for the next three years" (from an old district record book). On May 7, 1870 Hattie Fillies was employed at a salary of \$16 per month. A new building was erected in 1913; and in 1929 a basement was dug for a furnace, a playroom and for the use of the community club. The district was included in the Heyworth Unit District in 1948.

#### MORGAN SCHOOL (1) No. 17

In early days, pupils of this community attended a subscription school in a log house, *Shiloh School*, northeast of the recent site of Morgan School. In 1856 a frame house was built on the recent site at the southwest corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 25. Slab seats were placed against the walls and there was a piece of real blackboard in the north end of the room. This school received its name from Joseph Morgan who lived nearby. In the early days Henry Tilman, the teacher, was barred out of Morgan Schoolhouse at Christmas time with long benches barricading the door. Mr. Tilman finally consented to treat the children, so he was admitted to the school room. The last schoolhouse was erected in 1914. Morgan District always had a large enrollment. A building housing the Grange Hall and store located to the east of the

schoolhouse was burned in the late twenties. Morgan School is a part of the Heyworth Unit as organized in 1948.



SHORT POINT SCHOOL, 1928, Louise Hilts, teacher. (Ratio:  
Twelve to one.)

#### LYTLEVILLE SCHOOL (7) No. 18

In the 1830s a log house, with crude benches and slabs on pegs for seats, was located about two blocks north of the recent Lytleville School. A frame house was erected in the 1840s, just across the road to the north. Lytleville, named for Robert Lytle a Congressman from Ohio, was then a thriving village with a population of one hundred. Possibly the first water powered saw mill and grist mill in the county were located here. A bustling trading center for dry goods, groceries, and whiskey, it lacked but one vote of the committee to be the county seat of McLean County. (Information given here, acquired from Dave Hartson, born in Lytleville in 1834. Mr. Hartson died July 1922, six weeks after the author's visit.) Because the Illinois Central Railroad was built to the west, Heyworth began to grow and Lytleville to decline.

A Methodist church, at the south end of State Street in Lytleville, built in 1874, was sold to the school district in 1886. This building served as a schoolhouse, with remodeling and standardizing in 1921. It burned January 15, 1931; and a new schoolhouse costing about \$2,800 was built in the summer of 1931. Though the attendance dwindled as compared to the large enroll-

ments of former years, it was always a great place for public meetings. Lytleville School joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.



LYTLEVILLE'S NEW SCHOOLHOUSE. Jewel Arvin, teacher.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (3) No. 19

The first school in this district was conducted in 1840 at the Stewart (brick) home by V. Fell. At one time John Moore, later Lieutenant governor of Illinois, taught the school and tended his wagon shop, one-half mile east on the north side of the present school site. Peter Folsom and his wife also taught there. In the early 1850s a small site near the church on Main Street was leased for twenty years. A log house, often called Whig Row School, was erected. Elizabeth Gallager was the first teacher in the summer and Dr. Stewart followed in the winter term. The recent site on the south side of the slanting road in Section 15 was purchased from Jonathan Houser in 1867; and a house was built the same year. Ex-school Commissioner C. P. Merriam was the first teacher in this building. An extra teacher was also employed to teach the one hundred and seventy-five pupils attending the school. The name of the school was suggested by Dr. Stewart, an early teacher, because the school was the "center" of all knowledge in the neighborhood. In 1916 a modern schoolhouse was erected. Continuing to be the center of worthwhile community activities, this school with its beautiful timber setting and its mo-



CENTER SCHOOL, District No. 19. Using state plans, this house was built in 1916.

dern equipment was given the state superior rating in 1939. At one time this was a very large district until Sparta District and the southern part of Eldorado District were taken from it. Center School was included in the organization of the Heyworth Unit in 1948. The house is now a residence.

#### BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL (12) No. 20

In 1856 a small roughly built house was located at the southwest corner of Section 17. This building was moved one-half mile south and one-fourth mile east to the south side of J. S. Bishop's farm in 1865. Plastered, repaired, and new benches constructed, it was called School No. 12. The recent site forty rods east of the southwest corner of Section 20 was obtained from Ira Munson for \$25; and a new house was built by George Stevenson. Double seats were bought in 1886. The beautiful surrounding landscape suggested the name, *Bloomingdale*. In the first decade of the nineteenth century the schoolhouse was remodeled, but in 1948 this district, too, was included in the Heyworth Unit District.

#### PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL (4) No. 21

A small schoolhouse, with three windows on each side, was built eighty rods east of the southwest corner of Section 5, in 1855. In 1875 a new house was erected, while Mrs. J. J. Myers was the teacher. One hundred soft maples

were set out the next year and all of them grew. The school was already known as *Frog Pond*, but the directors said "This is now a pleasant place. We will call it *Pleasant Valley*". Made standard in 1918, the grounds and equipment of the school were well maintained by interested directors and good community cooperation. This district joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.

#### SPARTA SCHOOL (10) No. 22

In an early day a log schoolhouse, called the *Kimler*, was located near the east side of Section 13 on the Kickapoo. The first schoolhouse on the recent site, east of the road in Section 11, was built in 1857. In 1875 it was replaced by a new building. The old house was moved on skids drawn by twelve teams of horses a short distance east and used for a residence. After serving as a dwelling for sometime, the old school was moved to the south of the recent site and used for a barn. The house built in 1875 was burned in the winter of 1914. A partition was put into the old Methodist Church, just north of the school, and the school year was completed there. A larger building with a basement was ready for the fall term. Spelling contests were often held with Macedonia School, so Captain Stringfield said, "Since the Spartans defeated the Macedonians, let's call the school *Sparta*". This district supported a parents' club for many years. It joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.

#### DOWNS TOWNSHIP 22N-3E

A spur of the Bloomington Moraine extends into the northwest part of the township, resulting in many hills and beautiful scenery. The northeast area is also somewhat rolling. There is a gradual sloping to the south, with deep, black soil that will never wear out.

Early settlements were in Diamond Grove along the Kickapoo, which powered the saw mills, furnishing lumber for the building of Bloomington. When the railroad came through in 1870, P. B. Price platted a village, naming it Priceville, but the railroad officials insisted upon calling the station, Downs, for Lawson Downs. By 1875, the post-office and a store located at Delta, a half mile to the northwest, were moved to the new village. The name, Downs, was soon established. Downs provided a long needed trading center and grain market for those living in the north end of the township, though residents of the south part with its bottomless roads endured a real hardship until hard roads were built. Some time after Downs was well established, a store, a blacksmith shop, and post office were located at South Downs, but these have now ceased to exist. Many sturdy and public-spirited citizens have lived in Downs Township. The Honorable John Cusey from there represented McLean County in the state senate.

## DOWNS SCHOOL - KICKAPOO UNION SCHOOL (6) No. 31

When No. 6 was laid out, it consisted of one and one-half sections in Downs Township and about three sections in Old Town Township. In early days a log school was located near the spring one-half mile west of the present village of Downs. In 1857 the site of *Spring School* was obtained by the directors and a frame house was built to replace the log school. The nearby village of Delta, along the road, consisted of a store, post office, saw mill, and blacksmith shop. The Spring Schoolhouse was later moved to Downs for a residence. In 1869, the Kickapoo Union District was established as a special charter district by the Illinois State Legislature.

The new district included about ten sections, the former Spring School District No. 6, and the Savidge District No. 8, just south of town. The *Savidge School*, named for Asa Savidge, was located at the intersection on the southwest corner, one mile south of town. The building was moved one block west of the grade school in Downs, and it still stands as part of a residence. The special charter named a six-member board of education, consisting of: A. M. Savidge, James Montgomery, J. B. Weaver, P. B. Price, T. B. Savidge, and T. Z. Hall. A two-room building, 28x30 feet, was erected on the present site. An addition for coat rooms, on the east, provided separate entrances for boys and girls. The upper room, intended for the higher grades and some high school subjects, was reached by an inside stairway. The brick grade school was erected in 1895 at a cost of about \$5000. This building has four classrooms and served for both grade and high school until the new Community High School was ready in 1920. Good equipment, indoor toilets, and an excellent deep well have been provided. Three teachers were employed, although by 1945 the enrollment had been dwindling for some time. It is now included in the Downs-Ellsworth unit.

## DOWNS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 388

The Downs Community High School was organized November 1, 1919. The new brick building was completed in 1920. They have maintained a good four-year program, though somewhat handicapped by having a small enrollment. The Downs-Ellsworth Unit District No. 3 was organized March 20, 1948.

## ADRIAN SCHOOL (2, 10, 6,) No. 23

Adrain was organized in 1857 as District No. 2 with school conducted for two years at George Bishop's residence. In 1859 a house was erected one-half mile west of the recent site. This was a small frame building on blocks. It was once blown off the foundations by a tornado. In 1869 the district was

extended one mile farther east and numbered 10. The house was moved one-half mile south and one-half mile east of the recent site. In 1870 the territory was cut off to the east; and the district was now No. 6. In 1877 the house was moved to the west side of Section 5, near the center of the district. A new house built in 1895 was remodeled in 1915 and further improved in 1935. Although the origin of the name is not known, this school was called *Adrain* as early as 1860. It joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.

#### SOUTH DOWNS SCHOOL (3, 8) No. 24

Territory embracing the recent district was laid out in 1865. Being sparsely settled the territory was unorganized until 1870 when a large part of the district to the east was included, and was known as District No. 8. A frame house was erected on the northeast corner of Section 9 (21N-3E). Textbooks were bought by the district. Voted favorably again in 1888, 1894, and 1896, South Downs was the only school in McLean County furnishing books for over a period of sixty-five years. A driven well with a two-inch casing was put down in 1887 by I. S. Sniff and J. R. Sacry. Very likely this driven well was the first in the county on school grounds. In 1905 the house was moved across the road to the northeast and used as a blacksmith shop. A new building was then erected which has been much improved in recent years. Alice Jean Patterson, author and teacher of nature study at Illinois State Normal University, attended this school and taught here three years in the early 1900s. The district was called *Center* as late as 1902 because it was the center of the township from east and west. It joined the LeRoy Unit in 1948, and was made into a two-room school.

#### LAFFERTY SCHOOL (1, 10) No. 25

Laid out in 1865 as District No. 1, but failing to organize and maintain a school, the territory was annexed to Covey District in 1868. When South Downs District was organized in 1870, two and one-half sections were included in that district. In 1882 the four sections which comprised the district until recently were again laid out as District No. 10. The site at the northwest corner Section 12 (21N) was purchased for seventy-five dollars from Hiram Buck; and the same neat frame building which served through the years was erected. It was named for W. S. Lafferty, a landowner and public-spirited citizen, residing just west of the site. Because of many large farms, attendance at the school was small. The house was modernized and well equipped. The district merged with the LeRoy unit in 1948.

#### COVEY SCHOOL (9) No. 26

Organized in 1862, this district built the recent small house eighty rods

west of the southeast corner of Section 26. The site was obtained from Cornelius Covey, hence it has always been called *Covey School*. John McConnell was the first teacher. In 1869 the district was extended south to the county line to include ten and one-half sections. Five sections were withdrawn in 1870 when South Downs was organized. In 1882 one and one-half sections were lost to Lafferty District. A small but interesting school was maintained through the years. In 1932, seventy years after its organization, Edward Covey, a great grandson of Cornelius Covey, taught the school. The district petitioned into the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### FROG POND SCHOOL (3) No. 27

In the midst of ponds, with bull rushes and croaking frogs, a small frame house was erected, following district organization in 1862. Located on the south side of Section 29, this house was used until 1875 when the site was purchased. Doty Brothers of Bloomington then erected the recent building. Samuel Sniff, James H. Simpkins, and James Doyle were directors at that time. The school was crowded to its capacity many times. Because of small attendance the Frog Pond School was closed in 1939 and the few pupils sent to other schools. The district joined the Heyworth Unit in 1948.

#### MACEDONIA SCHOOL (5) No. 28

The first house, located in the northwest corner of Section 20 in 1856, was moved one-half mile south to the recent site in the early 1860s. During the Civil War the schoolhouse was the meeting place of the "Knights of the Golden Circle", causing much contention at the time but now belonging to a forgiven past. Many political meetings and lively spelling bees were held at Macedonia School through the years. A new house, erected in 1890, was remodeled and made rather modern in the late twenties. A Baptist Congregation was organized and met at the school for some time. The district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### RUTLEDGE SCHOOL (4) No. 29

Laid out in 1862, this district was not organized until August 2, 1867, when Thoms B. Null, A. H. Pogue, D. F. Phillips were elected directors. The site on the south side of Section 23 was donated by Charles Rutledge, hence the name. After the farm was purchased by George Bechtel, however, it was called *Bechtel School*. James R. Covey was the first teacher, beginning October 5, 1867 at \$45 per month for six months. The cheaply built house, put up in 1867, was replaced in 1874 by the recent building. Rutledge School was kept in good condition and well equipped; and the Rutledge Club com-

posed of women of the community was very active through the years. This district was divided between the Downs-Ellsworth and LeRoy Units in 1948.

#### PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL (1) No. 30

This section of the prairie was almost completely settled in 1855. When District No. 1 was organized, a neat brick house was located eighty rods west of the southeast corner of Section 11. Replaced in 1885 with the recent building and remodeled in 1911 to meet standard requirements, the school has been well managed and equipped through the years. Further improvements in 1938 made this one of the ideal rural schools in the county. The little white house on the hill with a neat yard suggested the name of *Pleasant Hill School*. It had been called the *Brick School* and because it was located on the corner of a farm owned by the Clarke family for some generations many knew it as Clarke School. This district was divided between the Downs-Ellsworth and Leroy Units in 1948.

#### DIAMOND GROVE SCHOOL (2) No. 32

Pupils living in the west end of the grove attended the Kiuler School in Randolph Township in the 1840s. About 1855 the *Calhoun School* was built on the north side of the creek near a spring about one-half mile west of the later site. Named for William Calhoun, owner of the land, this crude frame building was replaced with the recent house at the new site in 1859. Because the grove was diamond shaped the school became *Diamond Grove*. The house at the southwest corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 7 was remodeled to meet state requirements. Though it was one of the oldest buildings in the county it was kept in excellent condition. The yard had many beautiful trees. The United Brethren held meetings and organized at the Calhoun School before the church was built. This district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### HALL SCHOOL (7) No. 33

At the close of the Civil War a two-story building replaced a crudely built house on the recent site two miles east of Downs. The upper story was a hall for community use, thus the name *Hall School*. The first roughly made benches were used until 1879 when the upper story was removed. Sometimes as many as forty pupils attended Hall School. Destroyed by fire in 1905, another schoolhouse was erected in 1906. It has since been modernized. This district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### EMPIRE TOWNSHIP 22N-4E

This township, like the others in the lower tier of townships in this County, is six miles wide and eight miles long, and contains forty-eight sections. For

some time it was known as LeRoy Township, but another township in the state by that name made it necessary to change it to Empire. Old Town Timber follows the northern border rather closely. Other timber areas flank Salt Creek and its western branches which drain the entire township. Outside the timbered sections the soil is rich and gently rolling. The main grove was named for John Buckles, the first settler, who came in 1827. LeRoy was platted in 1835, by A. Gridley and Merritt Covell, and was named after LeRoy, New York. Abundance of water and excellent timber contributed much to the early settlements. The trail, which later became an important stage route, also meant much to early inhabitants of this section of the county. A log schoolhouse was located in the northern edge of the woods in Section 28 in 1832. In 1836 a log house was built on Reuben Clearwater's land about a mile south of LeRoy. This building was used for both school and church services for many years. There has always been much interest and encouragement of religion and education; and no other community in the county can claim more loyalty or devotion to the various enterprises that they have promoted, including fairs and homecomings.

#### LEROY SCHOOLS (5, 3) No. 40

The first school in LeRoy was taught by James Lincoln, a relative of Abraham, in the summer and fall of 1837 in a room at the northwest corner of Block 4. In 1839 the men of the village built a frame schoolhouse, 24x30 feet, by donations, west of 311 North Main Street facing north. This building was used until 1850, after which school was held for some time in other buildings. Because of the growing demand for better and more advanced education than was being offered, the Presbyterian Church, located at what is now 412 North Chestnut Street, built in 1854, was called the *Seminary*. High school subjects were offered there until 1859, when it was taken over by the Public School Board and accommodated both the grade and more advanced students. A two-story, four-room brick school was erected at the present north side site in 1864. Although greatly overcrowded, this with a one-room addition served until 1892. The building, somewhat damaged by fire, was then repaired and the present stone trimmed brick building was added on the south side at a cost of about \$11,000. Because of the growing town and more pupils from rural districts, it was again necessary to provide more room. So in 1906 the Eugenc Field was built to house lower grades.

#### LEROY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 333

Organized February 15, 1916, LeRoy Community High School included ninety sections—forty-eight in Empire, sixteen in West, two in Arrowsmith,

six in Dawson, two in Old Town, and sixteen in Downs Township. A bitter battle in the courts ensued, for that was in the days of mud roads when a few miles were a real barrier. School was conducted for two years by the de-facto board of education. Some paid taxes under protest, claiming that a new building would cost \$100,000, while promoters of the new district felt they could build for \$50,000. The Supreme Court declared the act, organizing this district, illegal in 1918. The court ruled that since a law existed to organize township high schools, this act could not apply when a complete township was involved. The district was thus dissolved, but it took many years for the animosity to die. Since conditions have changed, some are sorry they took action against the district.

#### **EMPIRE TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL No. 344**

Following dissolution of LeRoy Community High School District, a township high school was organized in 1919. Members of the first board of education were: Oscar M. Phares, president; Ralph V. Humphrey, secretary; Clyde Doolcy, William Fricke, and Burwell Barr, as members. C. E. Joiner was superintendent at that time. A \$330,000 building was completed in 1921. They can justly claim one of the excellent high schools of Central Illinois. Four rural districts north of LeRoy formed a consolidation in the 1940s, as well as five districts to the south. On March 13, 1948, all schools in this area, the West Consolidated District, and some territory in Downs Township formed the LeRoy Unit District No. 2.

#### **NEW ENTERPRISE SCHOOL (6, 12) No. 34**

As settlers came to Empire Township, seven sections of District No. 6 found the distance to White Oak School a serious handicap. In 1868, therefore, four sections to the south were cut off and organized as No. 12. The site at the northwest corner of Section 8 (21N) was selected because it was the center of the new district. Facing east, the new school was known as *Cornstalk School* for many years. The Sunday School conducted there was called "Prairie Union". In 1883 the recent building was erected and named *New Enterprise*. It was remodeled in recent years to meet state requirements. This school joined the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### **STERLING SCHOOL (11, 10) No. 35**

School was conducted for a time in the Ballard home. In 1856 a frame building was erected on the east side of the recent site, in Section 4 (21N), about three miles south of LeRoy. Donated by R. M. Guy, it was known as *Guy School*. Fire destroyed this school in 1866. A brick house was then built on the enlarged site from brick made by William Phifzenmeyer two

miles north, but the brick building was torn down in 1911 and replaced by a new frame house which later was modernized.

For many years the "LeRoy Circuit" conducted Sunday school and meetings at Sterling School. When the present house was built, a former pupil, John A. Sterling was a member of Congress. Proud that he got his start here, the district placed a beautiful sign *Sterling School* above the door. Families of Charles and Samuel Sterling furnished some good teachers, lawyers, and statesmen. William Vance, prominent in county affairs, was a director of the school for more than thirty years.

In 1941 an artesian well, the only one on any school grounds in the County, was drilled at the Sterling School. The district joined the LeRoy Unit No. 2 in 1948.

#### EMPIRE SCHOOL (8, 7) No. 36

In the early 1860s, this district was organized as No. 8. The recent house was built near the center of the district, one-half mile south of a later location. At that time it was known as *Heclea School*, because it was on the Edward Healea farm. After District No. 7, Mt. Zion, was dissolved in 1868, more than a section of that territory was annexed to Healea District, which was renumbered 7. Moved to the recent site at Empire Station, it was named *Empire School*. The building was kept in good condition and the school well equipped. The district consolidated with the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### BONNETT SCHOOL (5) No. 37

Mt. Zion School, built in 1855 in District No. 7, included three sections in Empire and one in West Township. The schoolhouse was located one-half mile west of the township line on the Mt. Olive Road. In 1869 District No. 5 was extended east to include most of No. 7; and a building was erected on the recent site on the hard road two miles southeast of LeRoy. Named *Birney* for Hugh Birney who lived to the east of the school, an enrollment of fifty or sixty was not unusual for this school. (Mt. Zion School was then closed and also Clearwater and two log schools, one west and the other north).

Thomas Sterling, later a U. S. Senator from Dakota, taught Birney School at a time when the enrollment was ninety-seven. When Noah Wantling taught there in 1860-1861, the "Salt Creek Congress" was organized, in which Republicans and Democrats were evenly divided. Many hot and lively debates on slavery resulted. Charles Sterling was president of the organization. Long noted for its spelling bees and debate societies, an excellent community spirit was shown continually by the constant improvement of building and grounds, by good entertainments and by cooperation with the teachers.

Since the early 1930s, they have had some interesting homecomings. The



BONNETT SCHOOL, 1929, Marie Polk, teacher, who instituted Thanksgiving potluck dinners at schools where she taught.

first house was burned in 1908; the new house was modern. For a long time it was called *Bonnett School* for Yontz Bonnett, who owned the timber lot, on which it stood. This school merged with the Leroy Unit in 1948.

#### HICKORY SCHOOL (6, 9) No. 38

Hickory School was located on the hard road, one and one-half miles southwest of LeRoy. The many hickory trees in the yard suggested the name. After 1856 the children of this area attended a log school west of the road near the center of Section 31. This old log school served until 1866, when the White Oak School No. 6 was built south of Salt Creek. The Buckles School No. 9 was then located to the northeast in the Buckles neighborhood. These two schools were united in 1873, to form the Hickory District. Buckles School was moved to the new site and enlarged, while White Oak School was torn down. The modern and well equipped recent building was erected in 1903. The enrollment has been above average. Lyon Karr taught here in 1873, and later became county superintendent of Woodford County. Walter Dill Scott, who became president of Northwestern University, had his rural teaching experience here in 1890 and 1891. This district became a part of the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### FAIRVIEW SCHOOL (4) No. 39

Organized in 1863, with Joseph P. Kann, John Gilmore, and Leonard

Morris as directors, the first school in this district was called *Wolf Mound*. The small building erected, was moved twenty rods east to a site north of the state road, on the half section line of Section 18, but in 1869 the district was extended north to the township line. In 1873 the school was moved three-fourths mile north to the center of Section 18. A new house was built in 1875 at a cost of \$660, with seats and desks costing \$115. The site was condemned in 1883, because it was low, so the district voted to move the house to the recent location on the hill in Section 7 and the school then became known as *Fairview*. A Sunday school organized in 1874 with Wesley Brown as superintendent is mentioned as the "Pleasant Valley Sabbath School". It was remodeled and standardized in 1921, and became a part of the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### WEST CRUMBAUGH SCHOOL (8) No. 41

When the settlers began moving onto the prairie, this district was organized as No. 8. A neat frame house facing south was erected on the southeast corner of Section 14 in 1858. The road from the east turned north at this corner instead of passing in front of the school. Thus when a new school was built in 1893, it was built facing east. The new gravel road was extended along the south side of the school in 1937. At one time this was almost entirely a Crumbaugh settlement and enrollment of thirteen in the school was all Crumbaughs. The schoolhouse was remodeled in recent years so as to be quite modern. The district consolidated with the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### BRITTIN SCHOOL (1) No. 42

In the late 1850s, a frame house was built south of the center of Section 2 facing south where the road turns to the west. Pupils from this section had previously attended a log school about a mile west. In 1860 pupils from West Township attended this school named for Nathan Brittin who furnished the site. In 1919 the schoolhouse was becoming rather dilapidated so that some wished to repair it. Put to a vote, it was decided to build a new modern house in the center of the district, near the southeast corner of Section 2. Though the enrollment was always small, there was good community spirit. The school merged with the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### BISHOP SCHOOL (2) No. 43

In the early 1860s a house was built on a site donated by James Bishop in the southwest corner of Section 10 near the creek. An interesting school was conducted there for many years. District No. 10 occupied territory north and extending to the west of the township. In 1869 the west side of No. 10 was annexed by Fairview District. The small remaining district selected a site on

the Gilmore land and built a house in 1879, but was consolidated with Bishop School No. 2 in 1882. The house was moved one-half mile south to the northwest corner of Section 10. Though for many years called *Gilmore School*, the name *Bishop* was chosen to honor the donor of the new site. Quite often the school was called *Possum Flat*. The house was maintained in fair condition. Bishop was included in the organization of the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

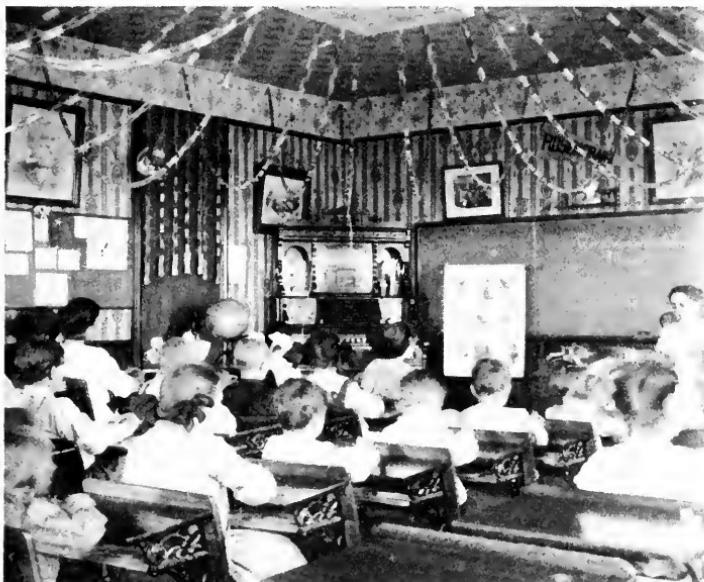
#### WEST TOWNSHIP 22N-5E

This township is second from the east in the southern tier of townships. It was originally all prairie except about three hundred acres in the northwest corner. The soil is mostly a deep black loam. The north end of the township is rather high, sloping down from the moraine to a flat area, that requires a dredge ditch for drainage. A moderate ridge crosses the south half of the township which recedes to a level tract, drained by the east branch of Salt Creek.

There were no white settlers in this township before 1850. The stockaded fort in Section 5 and the old Kickapoo town to the northwest had long been occupied by the Indians, as indicated by the presence of blue grass over a large surrounding area. Organized in 1857 this township was very appropriately named Kickapoo. However another township in the state had previously selected that designation so McLean county's Kickapoo Township became *West* in honor of the first supervisor, Henry West. The township school trustees met in December 1857, and divided the township into two school districts—the northern twenty-four sections became District No. 1, the southern half of the township became District No. 2. That year a few pupils were sent to the Mt. Zion School in the township to the west. The next year West Township was remapped into three districts—the northern third as No. 1, the southern third as No. 2, and the middle district as No. 3. West School was located in District No. 1, about three-fourths mile east of the recent Love School. The first school opened in the township was District No. 2 at Coleman and Wamsley School close to one-half mile west of Mt. Olive Church. However the district refused to pay the builders, so the house was later sold to District No. 3.

Through the influence of Henry West, the school section was not sold. When a petition was filed in 1876 to sell it, Mr. West obtained an appraisal of \$29.93 per acre. A five-year lease on the school section had previously been negotiated, so there were no bidders at the time of the sale. An additional eighty acres in Section 34 were purchased by the trustees later. Income from this land resulted in low school taxes, even though West Township schools always were maintained at a high standard.

Many settlers of the Township were very substantial citizens. The Honorable Simeon West, who became prominent in public affairs, donated the twenty acres of West Park as a forest preserve for the County and he was also instrumental in having the marker placed at the Kickapoo Fort site. Eight northern districts of this Township formed a consolidation in 1946. The schoolhouses of Districts No. 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54 were moved to the southwest corner of Section 16; those of District No. 48 and 49 were sold and District No. 47 withdrew from the Unit.



ROSECRANS SCHOOL, 1912. Amy Claggett, teacher.

#### HAMILTON SCHOOL (9) No. 44

Named for John Hamilton, who gave the site from his large farm, the recent schoolhouse, built by Leander Baker in 1871, was located at the southeast corner of Section 6 (21N). A small building which had served this district for about ten years was sold January 27, 1872 to David Carr for \$51 payable in twelve months at ten percent interest. The school house was remodeled and the grounds much improved in 1917 when it was standardized. An excellent school was always conducted at Hamilton. Farmer City Unit included the former Hamilton District.

#### ROSENCRANS SCHOOL (10) No. 45

Organized in 1864, the schoolhouse erected at the southeast corner of

Section 4 (21N) was replaced by the recent building in 1900. In 1911 the first circulating heater in the township was installed at Rosencrans, putting this school on the standard list. Remodeled in 1917 to comply with the new sanitation law, an addition was built on the west side for coat rooms and toilets. Named for nearby land owner, O. M. Rosencrans, the district is now a part of the Farmer City Unit.

#### KUMLER SCHOOL (11) No. 46

Nearly a mile southwest of the recent site beyond the creek west of the road a house was built in 1871, by John Weedman at a cost of \$90. This rather small structure was later moved to the center of the district, at the southwest corner of Section 1 (21N). Replaced in 1894 by the recent building for which H. E. Judd was the contractor, the old building was sold for \$48.75. Named for the Rev. John A. Kumler, who was prominent in this community, the school was made standard in 1912 and remodeled to comply with the Sanitation Law in 1917. The district merged with the Farmer City Unit.

#### KIMLER SCHOOL (6) No. 47

Organized in 1867, the first schoolhouse was built the next year at the northeast corner of Section 35. Destroyed by fire in 1874, it was replaced at once, with a small house. In 1895 the recent house was erected and the old one sold. In 1916 Kimler School was remodeled and became the first schoolhouse in the township with a basement. Named for W. J. Kimler, an early settler of this community, the site was purchased from Marion L. McClure for \$65. Standardized in 1917, the school always was the center of community interests. After joining the West Consolidation in 1946, the residents of the district became dissatisfied and withdrew, and petitioned into Bellflower Consolidated District.

#### GRIZZELL SCHOOL (7) No. 48

The first school in West Township was conducted in District No. 2 in 1857. In 1858 the directors refused to pay for the schoolhouse built by Coleman and Wamsley, so the pupils were sent to Mt. Zion School in Empire Township. Another building was erected for District No. 2 in 1861, although in 1867 the district was divided into No. 6, 7, and 8. District No. 7 bought the house for \$325 and the furniture for \$14.50, payable July 1, 1869 at ten per cent interest. In 1874 this house was moved one-half mile east to the recent site at the northwest corner of Section 34 and rebuilt. A new house was built in 1908 and the old building sold for \$26. In 1917 the school was

improved and made standard. The school was named for Henry Grizzell, for many years a landowner and trustee of schools. This district joined the West Consolidation in 1946 and became a part of the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### Mt. Olive School (8) No. 49

Property belonging to West Township's first District No. 2 was divided equally in October 1867, among Districts No. 8, 6, and 7. To the new District No. 8 William Hammond deeded for a consideration of one dollar the site of one-fourth acre at the Southwest corner of Section 29. A schoolhouse, built in 1868, was destroyed by fire in 1904 and the recent building was erected in 1905. Mt. Olive Methodist Church located on the corner to the north and the school were named for "Grandma" Olive Hammond. Its placement on the Standard list in 1917 and further improvements made in 1924 resulted in a convenient and modern school. Mt. Olive District, a part of West Consolidation in 1946, was included in the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### EAST CRUMBAUGH SCHOOL (3, 402) No. 50

When this district was organized in 1861, it consisted of twelve sections and included what later became Districts No. 50, 51, 52. Marcus Craig's upstairs room housed the school in April, 1863. The pupils watched from the upstairs window the swimming ducks and geese and the dancing cranes at the surrounding ponds southwest of Sabina. The next school was a log house located one-half mile west of the recent site at the southeast corner of Section 18. The last school house was built in 1869. J. T. Crumbaugh owned the land on which the school was located, hence the name. After consolidation with the two districts to the east in 1920, the newly elected board was not in favor of discontinuing one-room schools, so the consolidation was voted out. In 1928 the districts were numbered as before. East Crumbaugh joined the West Consolidation in 1946, which lasted until the formation of the LeRoy Unit in 1948.

#### DOCKUM SCHOOL (4, 402) No. 51

In 1872 the recent schoolhouse was built at the northeast corner of Section 21 by I. N. Harding and Company at a cost of \$450. Maskel Dockum was a member of the Board of Directors, so it is supposed that services he performed for the school account for its name. The Consolidation voted in 1920 included plans to make Dockum a community center and to erect a suitable building. The project was dropped because of the opposition to this idea which developed. Included in the West Consolidation in 1946, the district became a part of the LeRoy Unit in March, 1948.

## SALT CREEK SCHOOL (3, 402) No. 52

Salt Creek, from which the school takes its name, runs to the east of the schoolhouse. In 1869 the present site, one acre at the southwest corner of Section 13, was deeded to the district by Simeon West for one dollar. A clause in the deed states, "The school is not to be used for religious meetings, except on Sundays, and then only in the day time." Josiah Calout was paid



SALT CREEK SCHOOL, district No. 52, 1930. Bernadine Wyckoff, teacher.

\$10.75 to make the seats for the new school which was built in 1870. Improvements in 1917 made the school standard. In 1920 Districts No. 50, 51, and 52 were consolidated as District No. 402. Though in 1924 the Board of Education improved, modernized, and added equipment, the consolidated district was voted out in 1928. The three original districts were reorganized then and given their former numbers. This status was maintained until 1946, when this district joined the West Consolidation. At present it is a part of the LeRoy Unit, with which it merged in 1948.

## WHITE STAR SCHOOL (1) No. 53

In 1867 District No. 1 West Township was divided into Districts No. 1 and 2. The directors of the new District No. 1 obtained the recent site at the southeast corner of N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3 from George W. Snook. Consequently for many years, it was known as the *Snook School*. The early house burned in

1914; and a well equipped house was constructed to comply with new school sanitation requirements. After Mr. Snook was gone, when the school was nicely painted someone suggested the name *White Star*. The West Consolidation included this district in 1946, but in 1948 it became a part of the LeRoy Unit.

#### LOVE SCHOOL (1, 2) No. 54

When old District No. 1 was divided, the new No. 2 was allotted the west portion consisting of six sections. In 1869 a schoolhouse was built on the southeast corner of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5. Crude benches on three sides of the room, big desks for books, and seats in front for the smaller pupils comprised the early school's equipment. The house built in the 1890s was remodeled and standardized in 1917. The school was named for James Love, who lived across the road to the south. A record shows, "\$8.12 paid to James Love for building fires in the schoolhouse last winter", dated 3-20-1872. In 1946 the West Consolidation absorbed Love District, while in 1948 the still larger LeRoy Unit superseded the earlier organization.

#### BELLFLOWER TOWNSHIP 22N-6E

Located in the southeast corner of the county, in topographical appearance, Bellflower Township is slightly undulating. A moderate ridge from the north forms a divide between Salt Creek to the west and the Sangamon to the east. Because it was open prairie, there were no early settlements. The 'Lone Tree' on the bank of Salt Creek was a landmark for many years. How it survived the prairie fires will always be a mystery. The county road from Bellflower Station to Saybrook through Anchor to Potosi and Fairbury helped in obtaining mail and home supplies. It was the railroad, which came in 1871, that solved the problem of marketing grain and livestock. The farmers made an intensive effort toward drainage, using open ditches and tile drains, and as a result the farms have been unusually productive. Like other townships of the state, gravel roads have relieved the local transportation difficulties. The name, *Prairie*, was suggested for the town, but Jesse Richards felt that the name of his favorite apple, the *Bellflower*, should be considered and he won.

In 1905 the township high school was organized. The promoters of this project deserve much praise, for it made possible advanced education to many young people. It was an uplifting influence for the entire community. The first Board of Education of the Bellflower Township High School consisted of Taylor Williams, DeWitt Goach jr., W. C. Morgan, Ed. S. Bradbury, and John Marsh. The next year H. C. Struebing joined the Board and served for thirty-three years, with an interest that would be difficult to duplicate.

**BELLFLOWER SCHOOL (4, 5, 58) No. 88**

In the late 1860s a small frame schoolhouse was located near the west side of District No. 4 in Section 28. Moved in 1872 to the north side of the present school grounds in the newly established village of Bellflower, this house with another one-room structure placed to the west served an increasing number of pupils. In 1882 the purchase of Lots 1, 2, and 3, or the east half of the block, completed the present site. A two-story frame building erected at that time served the district until 1918, when the present beautiful brick building was placed in the center of the block at a cost of \$28,000.

After the frame house was built, three grade teachers were employed. In 1899 an extra teacher was added; and high school work was offered. Three teachers were needed in the grades until 1917. After the construction of the present building, four teachers were employed and a special teacher was added later for music and art.

In 1869 District No. 5 consisted of nine sections of land. After the village of Bellflower was established, there were but four sections until 1917 when District No. 88 was organized from the former District No. 58 and the adjoining territory. This district and the high school have received substantial endowments from Marion Flanigan and others. One of the best elementary schools in the county is maintained here. A few years ago the State awarded it a superior rating. The Bellflower Consolidated School was organized in 1947.

**BELLFLOWER TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL No. 311**

The first township high school in the County was organized at Bellflower. A new building was erected in 1906 at a cost of about \$13,000. Beginning with two teachers, the faculty increased to three in 1908 and to four in 1910. Larger enrollments necessitated enlargement of the building in 1916. More courses and additional teachers were also necessary. The old assembly room was divided into classrooms and a shop was provided in the basement which had been a gymnasium. An addition on the north side of the building provided a new assembly hall, a library on the upper floor, and a spacious gymnasium below. The improvements cost around \$15,000. Further improvements costing \$19,000 were made in 1936, including an excellent stage at the north end of the gym and a modern home economics department. In 1940 the faculty consisted of seven teachers and a student enrollment of close to ninety. The same year two school buses were obtained to provide needed transportation for all students. Affairs of the school have always been conducted in a business like way which has added to the school's efficiency and has increased community interest in Bellflower Township High School.

## OLIVER SCHOOL (7) No. 55

From the time the boundaries of this district were laid out in 1857, few changes were made. At the close of the Civil War a house was built on the south side of the road across from the recent location, at the southwest corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5 (21N). The site was donated by John C. Oliver from whom the school took its name. The later house was built in 1898. It was the best school in the township because it had a basement. Indoor toilets were installed later. Oliver was made standard and for many years was an excellent school. With a small enrollment the school was closed in 1938 and the few pupils were transported to Bellflower. The Bellflower Consolidation included this district in 1947.

## OSMAN SCHOOL (6) No. 56

In 1870 a frame building was located on the south side of the road one mile west of the present location. This structure was moved to the recent site in 1885 and remodeled in 1913. The brick building was constructed in 1919 at a cost of \$4,000. While the equipment has been good, heavy enrollments have made it difficult to have an ideal school. The little village was named for Moses Osman, an official of the railroad. In 1949 the District merged with Bellflower.

## CALEDONIA SCHOOL (4) No. 57

This district as laid out in 1866 consisted of eighteen sections with but scattered settlements. A school was located on the south line of Section 28. In 1870 six sections were detached to the south for Osman District and four sections to the west for Bellflower District. A new schoolhouse was then erected on a site in Section 23. In 1919 the house was removed one-half mile east to the recent location at the southwest corner of Section 24 on the Bunney land for which the district paid \$25 a year rent. The remodeled house was one of the most modern and well-equipped in the County. The name was suggested by the tune, *Caledonia*, from the hymn book used in Sunday school in the new schoolhouse. The district consolidated with Bellflower in 1947.

## PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL (9) No. 59

Organized in 1872, the district consisted of four sections taken from District No. 5. At that time the recent neat frame building was erected on the northeast corner of Section 31. Some additional territory was added in 1927 when the McDaniel School District was dissolved by the trustees. An interesting school was well maintained until about 1930 when it was closed because it



CALEDONIA SCHOOL, District No. 57, 1931. Winifred Sinclair, teacher.

was better to transport the few pupils to Bellflower. The surroundings suggested the name, *Pleasant Valley School*. They joined the Bellflower Consolidation in 1947.

#### McDANIEL SCHOOL (8) No. 60

This district was organized in 1871 from territory detached from Districts No. 2 and 5. The building facing south was erected in the southeast corner of Section 18. When the house was built in 1874, the lumber was hauled from Champaign and the carpenter received \$50 for his work. Named the *McDaniel School* for George McDaniel, it was often called *Bradbury School* for W. T. Bradbury, who owned the land. Standardized in 1913, the school's enrollment soon became very small. After 1925 school was not maintained for two years, the district was then dissolved by the school trustees. The discarded building was sold for \$170.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (3) No. 61

At the close of the Civil War, a small house was built on the site at the southeast corner two miles north of Bellflower. At that time most of the settlements were in the northwestern part of the district of nineteen and three-fourth sections. When the schoolhouse burned in 1900, a new building was erected the same year, which was nicely maintained. From early times the

school has been a center of neighborhood interest. Of recent years some very large homecomings have been held here. Probably the first school in the Township, it has always been known as *Center*. It consolidated with Bellflower in 1947.

#### PRAIRIE COTTAGE (1) No. 62

In 1875 when old No. 1 was divided, the schoolhouse was moved three-fourths mile south to the east side of the road, which was then about the center of population in the new district. The cozy little house, painted white, could be seen for some distance on the open prairie, which suggested the name *Prairie Cottage School*. In 1902 a new building was erected one-half mile farther south on the southeast corner of Section 11. Made standard in 1911, the school was kept in fair condition although enrollments were below average for many years prior to its consolidation with Bellflower in 1947.

#### VICTORIA SCHOOL (6, 1, 10) No. 63

At one time some territory of this district was connected to District No. 6 in Cheney's Grove Township, known as *Peg and Awl School*. In 1870 District No. 1 was organized and a house was built at the southeast corner of Section 2. That school was referred to as *Old No. 1*. In 1875 part of No. 1 was detached to form No. 10 and a house was erected one-fourth mile south of the northwest corner of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2, the recent site. Though the house burned March 1927, the term was completed at a nearby residence. A beautiful new building with a basement and new type storm retreat was completed in October. The name was suggested by an admirer of Queen Victoria. Victoria School merged with the Bellflower Consolidation in 1947.

#### HALL SCHOOL (2) No. 64

A schoolhouse erected in 1864 one-fourth mile east of the southwest corner of Section 5 has served Hall District through the years. The small building was remodeled at times and kept in good condition as were the grounds. Many excellent teachers and pupils, who on many occasions ranked highest in the Township and County, brought honor to Hall School. The school's name honors Moses T. Hall, an early settler on the farm from which the school site was deeded to the district. In 1947 this school became a part of the Bellflower Unit.

#### ALLIN TOWNSHIP 23N-1W

Though this township now bears the name of James Allin, the pioneer of Bloomington, for some time it was known as *Mosquito Grove Township*.

It is the middle township on the western border of the County. The third principal meridian forms the eastern boundary. The prairie area is quite level though it slopes slightly to the southwest. Drainage is provided by branches of Sugar Creek.

In 1830 Miles Brooks established a home in the timber in the south part of the Township, an area now called *Brook's Grove*. Some years later a log school was built in that neighborhood. The first school in the Township, however, was held at the home of Mr. Stout at Brown's Grove, until a log schoolhouse was built in that area. At one time the Reddons, leaders of a band of prairie bandits or horse thieves, occupied Mosquito Grove in the northern part of the Township. These unwelcome inhabitants were later chased from the County. Upon completion of the Jacksonville branch of the Chicago and Alton Railroad in 1867, the village of Stanford was laid out, providing a local market. It was soon evident that the deep black soil did not make good roads at the times when most needed. Gravelled roads have now solved that problem fairly well. Allin Township has possessed many good citizens. Among them are Miles Brooks, Jr. and Homer Caton, who served in the State Legislature.

#### STANFORD SCHOOL (8) No. 68

The village of Stanford, then called Allin, was platted in 1867 when the railroad came through. During the next two years the population increased rapidly and a school district was organized in 1869. Territory was taken mostly from District No. 3, but the new district was numbered 8. School was held in the upper room of a store building until the present site had been obtained. Soon a two-story, two-room brick building was ready. In 1885 a two-room addition was made to the building; and in the spring of 1895 the question of a new building was voted on and carried. Not completed until after January 1, 1896, it was necessary to conduct school in vacant rooms—the primary and intermediate grades in the old town hall, the high school and grammar grades in an upper room of Dossett's store.

Three teachers were employed in 1886, while in 1889 Frank L. Horn, then principal organized the high school work which began in 1890. Records of 1905 show that the principal and an assistant took care of high school work, with three teachers handling the grades. Increased enrollment necessitated the addition of another grade teacher in 1906. Two additional teachers were employed for high school work in 1914. On April 13, 1946, rural schools of this area were consolidated with the Stanford Grade School.

#### STANFORD COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 350

This school was voted in on January 24, 1920. The new board consisted

of A. E. Reining, W. C. Rogers, Ben McReynolds, A. H. Springer, and Arthur Witham. The new \$150,000 building was erected without delay, the grounds landscaped, a large athletic field provided, and a band stand built to be used for community events. A large garage was constructed by the vocational agricultural students to house their cars. Schools have always been well supported by Stanford community.

#### BROOKS GROVE SCHOOL (5) No. 65

In early days this district included six sections in Allin and a large area in the northern part of Mt. Hope Township. A log schoolhouse was then located on the north side of Sugar Creek, one mile south of the recent site, on the northwest corner of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 32. A small frame house was built there in 1865. In 1880 a much better building was erected. The school has always been known as *Brooks' Grove*, for Miles Brooks Sr., the first settler in the grove in 1830. The directors of the district have always shown much interest in the school, keeping it well equipped, modernizing it, and selecting good teachers. The district consolidated with Stanford Grade School in 1946.

#### SWAMP INSTITUTE SCHOOL (4) No. 66

This section of the prairie was not settled until after 1860. A small frame school was than located on the south side of Section 26. The school's location, surrounded by low, level fields, suggested in early days the name, *Swamp Institute*. Around 1890 a much better building was built near the rear of the lot. This house was remodeled to meet standard requirements and was fairly well equipped. Community interest in meetings and school clubs in this district was excellent. Swamp Institute merged with Stanford in 1946.

#### BROWN'S GROVE SCHOOL (2) No. 67

This school and the grove to the north were named for the first settler, William Brown. A school had been located a short distance north of the railroad, on the west side of Section 24 in the early 1860s, but it was replaced by the recent building about 1875. Remodeled and modernized with an addition onto the front, an excellent, well equipped school was always maintained. At one time it was called *Bozarth School*, because of many Bozarth families in the community. In 1946 Brown's Grove was included in Stanford Consolidated School.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (9) No. 69

This small district, consisting of about two and one-half sections, was

organized in 1878 from territory detached from Districts No. 3 and No. 6. It was numbered 9 and later changed to 69. The name, *Center*, originated from location of this new school at the northwest corner of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 17 a point midway between the two schools involved in its origin. The enrollment was small most of the time leading to the neglect of both building and premises. In 1932, however, interested directors made improvements. Shortly afterward arguments arose and the school closed. The low valuation and the few pupils caused the pupils to be transported to Stanford. In 1946 Stanford Consolidated School absorbed Center School.

#### INDIANA SCHOOL (3) No. 70

When this district was organized in the early 1860s it included eight sections though not all of the area was settled at that time. A school was located on the northeast corner of Section 16. The Presbyterians held church services there in 1863 while their new church, one-half mile to the south, was being built. Territory was detached from this district when Stanford and Center Schools were organized. Several residents originally from Indiana began calling this school, *Indiana*, a name which held. The old building was remodeled into a modern school, nicely equipped. Although enrollment was small, patrons hesitated to close the school, but Indiana became a part of the Stanford Consolidate School in 1946.

#### WEST WARLOW SCHOOL (7) No. 71

When the district was organized in 1860 a neat frame house was built on the recent school grounds on the north side of Section 11. In 1897 this was replaced by a much larger building. Patrons' interest in the school resulted in good teaching, plenty of equipment, and a modern building. Interesting community meetings and homecomings also aroused community pride in West Warlow. The Warlows were early settlers in the vicinity and Richard A. Warlow donated the school site, hence the name. A school in Danvers Township, also named for the family, necessitated calling this the *West Warlow School*. The district consolidated with Stanford in 1946.

#### UNION SCHOOL (U6) No. 267

Originally laid out with three sections in this county and about the same number in Tazewell County, this district, composed entirely of low prairie land, was last to be settled. About 1866, however, a neat frame school was constructed near the center of the west side of Section 18, but it was replaced by a much larger building in 1894. Many residents of German descent gave rise to the name, *Germany*, for this school. Later called *German Union*,

since 1918 it has been known as *Union School*. Large homecomings spoke for the value of Union School, well managed by interested directors. Once very large, the enrollment dwindled until it was necessary to close the school and transport the pupils to other districts. The part of this district, which lay in McLean County, petitioned into the Stanford Consolidated District in 1948.

#### DALE TOWNSHIP 23N-1E

Long runs of level prairie to the southwest of the township suggested the appropriate name, *Dale*. This southwest section is drained by several branches of Sugar Creek. Harley's Grove is the only wooded area entirely within the township boundaries. Twin Grove, however, dips into the north side; Brown's Grove comes in for a short distance on the west side; and Blooming Grove follows the creek into the east side over a number of small hills.

Settlers came to the south side of Twin Grove as early as 1827, and to Harley's Grove a few years later but the vast prairie areas were not inhabited until around 1855. The establishment of Shirley in 1854 provided a market and trading center which flourished for some time. Mrs. Cordon Weed suggested the name, Shirley, for her favorite novel by that name. Another station, Covell, was located on the Jacksonville Branch of the Chicago Alton Railroad in 1867. Covell was named for Capt. M.L. Covell, a Bloomington attorney. Like other sections of the county with level land and deep rich soil, Dale Township had a real local transportation problem. When the movement for better roads started in central Illinois, the citizens provided excellent gravel road outlets for every farmstead. From the time of the early settlers, this township has had many worthy citizens, interested in the welfare of the entire community.

#### SHIRLEY SCHOOLS (5) No. 73

The Shirley District was organized in 1854 with John Foster, Hiram Quinn, and James Boulware as directors. Cordon Weed provided a frame house for the new district, located about ten rods east of the Vaughan Douglass residence facing south in a pasture. It was later moved near the road to a lot south of the Douglass place so as to face north. Mr. Boulware met J. L. Douglass at a Masonic meeting in Bloomington and invited him to teach school in Shirley. Mr. Douglass, a well educated man, had come west without funds and was looking for something to do. Though Douglass was well liked as a teacher, he sent for his wife who finished the term, since he wanted to take up other work in the village. Mr. Douglass helped plan the recent school building which was erected in 1869. The building was larger than was needed at the time because it was hoped that high school work would be added later, but Shirley failed to develop.

Following Mr. Douglass, Joab Brigham taught for many years in the Shirley schools. Records show that Mr. Brigham's sister, Mary B. Weed, was teaching one hundred and three pupils in the little house in 1863. Many of these pupils were Civil War refugees from Kentucky whose parents had joined friends here.



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL, 1917. Maudella Welchlen, teacher, and 4-H Club members on the plank.

At times Shirley had assistant teachers but more often a lone teacher struggled with heavy enrollments. It was a two-teacher school for several years. In addition to good equipment, a basement and a furnace were provided in 1939. The building burned July 11, 1947, after which the pupils were sent to the Benjamin Funk School. A two-room school was built in 1949.

For many years Shirley has had an excellent Masonic Lodge. After the Masonic Hall burned, the Masons met in the upper rooms of the school but about 1930 they bought the Methodist Church one block south of the school and remodeled it for their use.

#### SUGAR CREEK SCHOOL (7) No. 72

Sugar Creek District was created in 1868 from territory taken from Stringtown and California Districts. The directors met at the home of Henry Funk, August 3, 1868, and planned to borrow \$500 to build a schoolhouse.

The site three miles west of Shirley at the Becker corner was donated by Westley Hougham. Matilda Bowers was the first teacher at a salary of \$30 per month for a three month's term. Because there was no bell at one time, the teacher called the children by waving a cloth, thus giving the name, *Shake Rag*, to the school. The building was remodeled and a basement was added in 1925 at a cost of \$1048.98.

#### CALIFORNIA SCHOOL (1) No. 74

The first school in Dale Township was built in 1854, and a few years later moved one-half mile north. In 1872 it was moved one-half mile east to the present site, one and a half miles north of Shirley. Sam Evans, who lived near the school, because of his trips to California was known as "California" Evans, hence the school was named *California*. Sunday school and church meetings were held in the school for many years, with the local Christian congregation being organized there. Thomas Nicol, Joab Brigham, and Ephriam Hester were some of the early teachers. Remodeled in 1917 to comply with the sanitation law, the original building had a basement and other improvements added in 1919. California has been a very active community in recent years.

#### COVELL SCHOOL (6) No. 75

In 1857 a house financed by subscription was built on the Rogers land south of the Stringtown Road and became known as *Stringtown School*. Covell was laid out in 1867 by John L. Routt who later became governor of Colorado. In 1871 the school was moved to the north side of the slough, west of the road south of Covell. Some wished to have the school moved to the town; others preferred to have it in the center of the district. A. Gridley owned the site and threatened to replevy the house if it were not moved to town. Wesley Rogers and other directors had the schoolhouse moved into the road at night. Mr. Gridley, however, got possession of the building and assisted in moving it to Covell. School was held in Covell for more than a year after which a new building and site were voted. Much litigation ensued—the case was first tried by Clem Read, Justice of the Peace, then by the Circuit Court, and appealed to the Appellate Court. Each time the decision favored the new site three quarters west and one-half mile south of town. The opposition complained about the lack of road and the low ground of the site, Judge Reeves granted them a road in 1877. The new house, built and named in honor of Capt. Merritt L. Covell, was remodeled and made standard in 1919. Consolidated with Stanford in 1946, Covell later voted to withdraw.

#### SIMMONS SCHOOL (3) No. 76

After organization of the district in 1856, Joel Simmons sold the district

the site at the southeast corner of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8 for \$20. Until this time many pupils from this neighborhood had attended a log school in Dry Grove Township. The earlier frame building was replaced by the recent larger and better building in 1878. Often called *Freeman School* for Caleb Freeman, a land owner in the early days, yet it continued to be called *Simmons School*. The school was remodeled and a basement added in 1926, after having been standardized earlier. Rodney R. Cool, a highly educated young engineer from New York, was the first teacher. Simmons consolidated with Stanford in 1946.

#### DALE SCHOOL (2) No. 77

The present house was built on a site obtained from Henry Newton, at the northwest corner of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 14 soon after the district was organized in 1855. Originally there were two rows of handmade benches and desks about eight feet long. An aisle down the center kept the boys on the west side and the girls on the east side. Rebuilt in the 1890s, the building was again remodeled and modernized in 1932. This school was named for the township.

#### SPAULDING SCHOOL (4) No. 78

After the log house in Twin Grove was burned, settlers living in the east end of the grove built a frame schoolhouse. It was first located in a triangular piece of ground at what is now East Twin Grove Cemetery. This school was moved in 1858 to the northwest corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 2, where it stood on wooden blocks just west of the late building. The site of one acre was purchased from Franklin Spaulding. A new house erected in 1876 was standardized and improved in 1914. This was the first school in the county to serve hot lunches. Further improvement was made by addition of a basement in 1941. Excellent community spirit prevailed through the years. The district joined the Normal Unit by petition. Alice Williams began teaching at Spaulding in 1914 and was yet employed as teacher of the school when the building was destroyed by fire on Sunday night, October 17, 1948.

#### BLOOMINGTON TOWNSHIP 23N-2E

Bloomington Township lies high on the Bloomington moraine with a moderate slope to the southwest where the land is drained by Sugar Creek and the Little Kickapoo. The timbered area, known as Blooming Grove, originally covered about eight sections. Though there are numerous hills in the wooded portions and some on the prairies, for the most part the prairie areas are but slightly rolling with very fertile soil. The first permanent settlement in Mc-



SPAULDING GARDEN CLUB EXHIBIT, 1917. Alice Williams, teacher.

Lean County was made by John Dawson and John Hendrix at Blooming Grove in 1822. Named for the city of Bloomington, the township has been directly associated with Bloomington in the years of its growth and development.

In 1911 the City and the township were completely divorced by organizing the Bloomington City Township. This new township included all territory within the city limits. Property in Bloomington could no longer be assessed to improve the roads and bridges out in the country. A complete story of this city is told in previous chapters.

#### GRASSY RIDGE SCHOOL (8) No. 79

On the site west of the County Farm on the north side of Section 32, donated by John Lindley in 1844, a building known as the *Little White School* was erected in the late 1840s. It was twenty-two feet square and was furnished with split log benches. This house simply wore out. In 1876 a new house was built by Benjamin Quinn; the house was remodeled in 1917. Though for years this school was called *Simmons School* for "Old Davy" Simmons, a nearby settler, the name, *Grassy Ridge*, was suggested by the beautiful view presented from this elevation.

In 1851 Wilson Lindley gave the land to the southeast, on which was located the Christian Church and the cemetery. Grassy Ridge School received a safe water seal in 1930, the first awarded in McLean County by the Illinois State Department of Health. After the schoolhouse burned September 25, 1940, the Lake schoolhouse (District No. 8) was moved to this site.

#### ELDORADO SCHOOL (U6) No. 80

\* In 1856 a hewn log weatherboarded house was built on the northeast corner of Section 3. The neat frame house, which replaced the old one in the late 1860s, has served through the years; two floors were worn out through contact with pupil feet, but the building was always kept in excellent condition. For many years it was known as *Frog Pond School*. Eldorado School had the distinction of having as teachers: Effie Gault, mother of Gen. Harbord; Ella Chamberlain (Mrs. I. H. Light), mother-in-law of Major Bowes; Nettie Bills (Mrs. Dement), County Superintendent of Schools; Alta Oendorff Downs and Gladys Tracy Lantz, assistant county superintendents. Too, it was the first school officially visited by William B. Brigham. An outstanding community club was maintained in this district. Eldorado District voted to join the Heyworth Unit in 1948.



WALKER SCHOOL, 1916. County Superintendent B. C. Moore, Mrs. Moore, Donald, and Helen Reedy, visiting.

## WALKER SCHOOL (9) No. 81

The first school held in McLean County was taught in the Dawson cabin located a few rods south of what is now the Hanell residence. Each pupil paid \$2.50 for the four months school term, taught by Delilah Mullin. In 1827 a log schoolhouse, the first in the county, was built about one-half mile northwest of the present site. At least two other log houses were built in the 1830s, one east of the Dawson cabin and the other west of it. The school district was organized in 1834 and a half acre lot was obtained from William Walker, whose name the school bears. A small frame house was erected there, three-fourth mile west of the present location. In 1848 a small lot was purchased at Thomas Orendorff's sugar camp. There the first brick school in the county was built at a cost of \$363.55, paid for by private subscriptions. The remainder of the ten-acre timber tract was bought by the district in 1881. The present beautiful brick building was completed in 1903. Selected in 1913 to be a "model school" for Illinois State Normal University, approved equipment was installed, but the plan was abandoned after one year.

The spacious grounds and building have been kept in excellent condition. The affiliation with Normal University in 1934 for training of rural teachers under the supervising teacher, Waneta Sedgwick Catey, was a successful project and continued for ten years. For some time the school was known as *Blooming Grove* because of its location.



LAST DAY AT PRICE SCHOOL, 1925. Chester Castle, teacher.

## PRICE SCHOOL (10) No. 82

Pupils residing in this district attended the early school in Blooming Grove, but after 1845 the district was divided. A subscription school was held in James Price's front room with William Hodge as teacher. In 1849 a brick school with a low ceiling was erected west of the state road and north of the

present Lake Erie and Western Railroad. Measuring twenty by twenty-four feet, the new building was furnished with a wood stove in the center of the room with rows of benches on each side. Three painted boards at the west end of the room back of the teacher's table served as a blackboard. Because the school was becoming crowded and a railroad was surveyed nearby, it was decided in 1867 to build more nearly in the center of the district. A frame building was constructed at the northeast corner of Section 15 on land donated by George Price. Sunday schools were conducted in the brick building with John English as the first superintendent, and continued in the new house until 1904. Literary societies also played an important part in the early social life of this community. The Mercurian was organized in 1875. In 1887 its work was turned over to the Orange Literary Society. Many from the city of Bloomington attended and took part in literary society programs. Real interest was exhibited in spelling bees of early days, especially in the heated contests with Walker School. During more recent years Price School Parents' Club has functioned well.

A beautiful grove of maple and elm trees was obtained by planting small trees secured from nearby timber. Affiliated with Illinois State Normal University from 1926 to 1935, with Bessie Hibarger as supervisor, Price School has been one of the progressive rural schools of the county with many excellent teachers serving there.

#### HOUGHTON SCHOOL (4) No. 83

A frame house built one and a quarter miles south of Bloomington on Main Street was known as *Lincoln School*. Since it stood on the Stephen Houghton farm, it became known as *Houghton School*. A new brick building, erected in 1896, cost \$1,835.85; another room added in 1928 cost \$7,000. The Houghton School was on the first list of schools to be made standard in McLean County, 1910. With an added teacher it affiliated with Illinois State Normal University in 1926. Normal withdrew in 1944.

#### SUNNY POINT SCHOOL (7) No. 84

The present site, two miles southwest of Bloomington on Route 66, was donated as a Christmas present to the community by George Hinshaw in 1840. Though a log house had served the district since the early 1830s, a substantial frame house was then erected. A brick school house was built in 1867 at a cost of \$2,662.62 (\$3,000 had been appropriated). When the interior of this building was burned in 1878, the brick walls were utilized in rebuilding. Early enrollments show from seventy to one hundred pupils. Sunday school and literary societies had meetings here for many years. In 1927 the windows



SUNNY POINT SCHOOL, 1920. Marie Jones, teacher.

were changed so that the pupils faced north and a garage and fuel room were added on the south side in 1939. Known in the early days as the *Hinshaw School*, it was later called *Old No. 7*. In 1917 Mrs. Helen Reedy suggested *Sunny Point* because the point to the north where the sun shone was a favorite playground for the children on cool days. Annual homecomings are held.

#### ALEXANDER SCHOOL (5) No. 85

The district organized August 12, 1867 and purchased a site one-half mile southwest of Bloomington from B. M. Johnson for \$100. The first house, built in 1868, was brick. George Hinshaw, B. M. Johnson, and Anton Stein were the directors, and Joab Brigham was the first teacher. Known as *No. 5* for many years, it is now called *Alexander School* for a family by that name who lived south of the school. When the building was remodeled in 1922, the pupils were faced north instead of west to benefit from the extra windows added on the west side. This change complied with the standardization law of the State. A small room for an extra teacher was added in 1934 to take care of the large enrollments. The house burned November 8, 1934, and a nearby residence was rented in order to continue school. The present two-room brick building, costing \$7,000, was ready for school in the fall of 1935. Alexander District voted to join the Normal Unit in 1948 and school was continued there with three teachers, with grades one to six.



LITTLE BRICK SCHOOL, District No. 86, 1918. Bessie Platt, teacher.

#### LITTLE BRICK SCHOOL (6, 2) No. 86

This district, consisting of one and three quarter sections was laid out in 1864. At a special election, August 14, 1865, three directors were elected. Miss Sophia Elkins was employed to teach a six-month term at \$35 per month. School was opened October 22nd at the home of F. M. Emerson. The present site on Washington Street one mile west of Bloomington was obtained for \$103.33 and the brick school was then erected at a cost of less than \$2,000. In spite of residents in a narrow strip on the east edge of the district petitioning into Bloomington, the school enrollment increased rapidly. The census of 1881 showed 135 of school age in the district.

There was agitation to build another school near the city limits but an error in the voting caused delay. A building was rented at the east end of the district and Mrs. M. L. Moore was employed as principal with Ida Halde man as teacher, while Laura Howe taught at the brick school. In the spring of 1883, upon petition, the trustees divided the district. An area of about one-quarter section was designated as District No. 6 with the remainder of the district as new District No. 2. At a called election in District No. 2, O. Barnard, F. B. Molesworth, and Alex Bryant were elected directors. Within a few years most of the new District No. 6 was taken into the city.

About thirty years later, what was known as the *Sunny Side Addition* was attached to Bloomington, again to ease the crowded conditions at *Little Brick* as No. 2 was called. For some time the school had been known as *Emerson*

*School.* It was later called *Washburn* for A. Washburn, the florist, and finally *Little Brick*. The school was made standard in 1912, and in 1917 remodeled and stuccoed. From 1927 to 1941 the school was affiliated with Illinois State Normal University as one of the training schools for rural teachers. Because of an enrollment of more than sixty, another room of frame construction was added in 1942 at a cost of about \$3,000. The two teachers could then easily handle all the pupils including the seventh and eighth grade children, who had formerly been transferred to the city schools. The district is deeply indebted to a few noble, interested women. The Normal Unit absorbed Little Brick School in 1948, however, classes continue there for grades one to six.

#### MAPLE GROVE SCHOOL (11) No. 89

Organized as District No. 11, school was conducted in a two-room house east of the S. M. Baker brick residence and northwest of the present site on the Foreman land, one and one half miles east of Bloomington on Oakland Avenue. A house built in 1864 was often called the *Foreman School*, but it has become known as *Maple Grove* in recent years. Remodeled in 1925, the building was destroyed by fire on February 26, 1935. The new house built by Ed. Weaver of Downs was dedicated October 13, 1935. The school was affiliated with Illinois State Normal University for five years, serving as a training school for rural teachers.

The low ground to the west of the school was known as "Baker Flats". After fields were fenced trails over high ground had to be abandoned, this road was often impassable and much dreaded by those who came into Bloomington from the east. Maple Grove joined Bloomington District in 1949.

#### OLD TOWN TOWNSHIP 23N-3E

The name for this township is derived from the "Old Indian Town" located near the east end of the grove which crosses the southern border of the township. Located on the Bloomington moraine, the terrain is high. The southern part of the township is rough while the northern part is gently rolling prairie except Ireland Grove in a small area north of the center. Early Indian and emigrant trails crossed the township from the east and southeast. Timbered sections were taken up and settled in the 1830s. Among first settlers on the prairie was John R. Benjamin who started Benjaminville in 1854. An interesting settlement of Quakers followed in that community. (See School District No. 104.)

The first school was held in a barn owned by Lewis Case, an excellent type of citizen who came to this section in 1833. Held in the summer of 1838 this first school was taught by Miss Callista Stanton at a salary of \$1.50 per week. Afterward a log school was built, but church services were held

at the Case home for more than twelve years before a church was erected. When the Lake Erie and Western Railroad was built, it provided the needed transportation to nearby markets. Kickapoo Creek drains this area; its banks supplied gravel to relieve the struggle with the muddy roads.

#### HENDRYX SCHOOL (1) No. 91

For three months during the summer of 1856 a school was held in Arch Campbell's sheep house until a new house was completed in the fall. Located on the present site, forty rods west of the northeast corner of Section 26, the new school was taught by Charles Wilkerson. Sixty-three pupils were enrolled that winter. A carpenter's bench in the center of the room was used as a teacher's desk and the seats were handmade. Jacob Smail and Otis B. Donnelly later taught there. This house was burned in the 1870s, but the recent house was erected on the same small site. Remodeled in 1918, both the schoolhouse and the equipment were greatly improved. The school was named for Fred Hendryx who lived across to the north. Hendryx District joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948, but the building is yet being used for grades one to seven.

#### WHITCOMB SCHOOL (2) No. 92

Named for Jeremiah Whitecomb, who lived north of the school and served as a trustee for many years, the first school in this district was taught by C. C. Noggle in his home. It was located one mile southwest of the recent site, selected in 1858, near the center of Section 21 on the south side of the road. The house built at that time was replaced by a better building in the 1870s, which was destroyed by fire in the winter of 1933. A new structure with a basement and some modern features was ready for opening of school in the fall. The previous school term had been completed at the town hall. Large enrollments were noted at times and again there were very few pupils for so large a district. Whitcomb District was incorporated into the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### SHEEP EYE SCHOOL (3) No. 93

In the early 1850s William Bishop built a brick schoolhouse as a private enterprise. The bricks were burned on a nearby farm. When the district was organized in 1854, Mr. Bishop presented the building to the new district. This house was used until 1909 when it was wrecked by a wind storm. The new building was erected a short distance to the west, on the south side of Route 150 in the northwest corner of Section 30. Remodeled and kept up-to-date, Sheep Eye was one of the best equipped rural schools. For many years known as *Bishop's School*, the name, *Sheep Eye*, evolved from the fact that

Uncle Bobby Read raised sheep on his farm nearby. Most of this district was taken into the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948. The building has been remodeled by Dr. Fuller for a clinic.

#### IRELAND GROVE (4) No. 94

Known as *Ireland Grove* from the nearby grove where Stephen Ireland was one of the early settlers, this district, organized in 1855, consisted of twelve sections. Since most of the residents lived in or near the grove, a house was built east of the Kickapoo at the south side of Section 9, a location convenient to all. After settlers moved out on the prairie, territory was detached in 1867 for Prairie Union District. In the late 1880s the original house was moved to the George Porter farm, and a neat frame school replaced the old one. Remodeled at times, and well equipped to meet all new requirements, this building burned November 22, 1937. However a temporary building was ready for use shortly; and the summer of 1938 saw the completion of the present up-to-date school.

#### HOLDER SCHOOL (9) No. 95

The village of Holder was platted in 1871 by Charles W. Holder. Business men were attracted to the new station on the Lake Erie Railroad because of its grain market facilities. Two churches were moved here from Benjaminville, one and a half miles to the north. The distance of some two miles to their district schools was a serious problem to the citizens of the little village, so a petition for a new district was filed in 1893 with the trustees, who denied it.Appealed to County Superintendent J. A. Miller and taken to the Circuit Court, the petitioners finally won. The present building was then erected and for most of the time there have been large enrollments and an interesting school. Remodeled to meet standard requirements, it has been well maintained as a one-room school. Holder District joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948. The building is being used for grades one to six.

#### MOUNT PROSPECT SCHOOL (5) No. 96

When District No. 5 was laid out in 1855, it consisted of five and a half sections. A small frame house was built at the center of Section 12 fairly convenient to most of the pupils. As settlements increased to the northwest, however, it was necessary to erect a new house on the newly designated highway to the west. After Holder district took two and a half sections from this district, the school was moved to the northwest corner of Section 12 on the Bentown road. Destroyed by fire in 1907, a new house was ready for school in the fall. Mt. Prospect has been well maintained and nicely equipped through the years. Sunday school and community meetings were often held there. The origin of the name is a mystery. Fred W. Boston, a teacher in this

school at one time and for nearly fifty years the township school treasurer, said, "There is no mount near here, nor is there a prospect". The voters approved the merging with the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### PRAIRIE UNION SCHOOL (8) No. 97



PRAIRIE UNION SCHOOL, 1910, Margaret Shannon, teacher.

Organized in 1867 from territory detached from District No. 4, the first teacher was Florence V. Elliott. In 1883 the house was moved a few rods east to the newly purchased site at the southwest corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5. First known as No. 8 it was later referred to as *Doner School*. After Mr. Doner left the community, the name, *Prairie Union*, was suggested. The original house was remodeled and improved through the years to meet new requirements, including additional windows, hall and coat rooms, and more recently indoor toilets, library and electric lights. Enrollment has been above average. An excellent cooperative spirit has prevailed among the school directors, the parents, and in the community meetings. George J. Mecherle, founder of the State Farm Mutual Insurance Companies, lived east of the school. His children attended school there and he served some time as a director. The district joined Normal Unit No. 5 in 1949.

#### GILLUM SCHOOL No. 260

Gillum station on the Nickel Plate Railroad was named for Mary Gillum Condon, the daughter of John Price. Citizens of the community tried for

many years to induce the school board of Downs District No. 31, Kickapoo Union, to build a school in the village of Gillum, because it was difficult for Gillum pupils to attend the Downs School when the roads were at their worst. D. D. Donahue, State Representative, was the attorney representing the group working for the school. Quietly he secured the passage of a bill, approved June 5, 1911, that reduced the corporate limits of District No. 31, Kickapoo Union Special Charter District. Remaining territory was organized into Gillum District at once and the present frame house erected. School began that fall. The district became a part of the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### DAWSON TOWNSHIP 23N-4E

This township was known as Padua until 1891 when it was decided to name it for their enterprising citizen, Mr. Dawson. Along the south the township is bordered by the "Old Town Timber". Near the center of the township is the highest point in the county which furnishes the watershed for several streams. This gentle, sloping area provides rich, well-drained farm lands. Nearby markets were provided with the completion of the Lake Erie and Western Railroad, and by the establishment of Holder, Padua, and Ellsworth.

John Wells Dawson and John Hendryx, the first settlers of McLean County, came to Blooming Grove in 1822. Four years later so many settlers were coming that Mr. Dawson sold his claim and moved to the north side of the trail, about one mile from the east side of the township which today bears his name. There he established a tavern to lodge travelers and to sell grain, meat, and supplies to settlers who were moving westward. On a hill in the edge of the timber, he built a log schoolhouse where the first school in Dawson Township was held and which served for both school and religious meetings for several years. A cemetery was started on the hill. Another log schoolhouse, which was used until 1856, was built to the north on the trail. When "Old Town Chapel" was located at the corner to the east, the Banks School was built south of the chapel a few rods.

Schools had been conducted in the east end of the township for many years but the inhabitants of the west end did not have a school until 1844, when they induced the school trustees to secure a small timber plot along the county road on the east side of Section 32. There a log house was erected which was called *Gibbs School* for Elias Gibbs, the donor of the land. Used for school and neighborhood meetings, the school was even used as a home by some newcomers to the Grove while their new home was being completed. The Baptists, who later built a church one-half mile west, organized there.

An Old Settlers' Association was organized in July 1885 by a group of citizens assembled at Shinkle's hall in Ellsworth; and for twenty-five years annual meetings and picnics were held at Betzer Park south of Ellsworth. Prominent in organizing the Association were Marcus Banks, William Van Gundy, H. R. Arrowsmith, C. H. Whitaker, and G. W. Bane. A pioneer log cabin was erected. The interest in the picnics was remarkable, the attendance often reaching from five to eight thousand. In the years of its prosperity, many notables addressed the meetings, including Judge Weldon, General McClernard, Hon. T. C. Kerrick, President David Felmley, Gov. Joseph Fifer, Hon. J. H. Rowell, Judge Tipton, the Rev. J. J. Burke, Hon. John A. Sterling, L. H. Kerrick, I. N. Phillips, Dr. Richard Edwards, Dr. A. E. Stewart, Hon. Simeon West, and others. On August 8, 1901 the McLean County Historical Society met with the Old Settlers' Association. On this occasion papers of great historic value were given for many of the early settlers were present and gave personal accounts which have been preserved for future generations.

#### ELLSWORTH SCHOOL (6) No. 101

In the late 1860 the Garretson School, named for Talbert Garretson, who owned a small farm to the southwest, was located at the northeast corner of Section 23. The house, a small frame building with slab benches and pioneer equipment, was used only a few years. Ellsworth was platted in 1871 one-half mile north and one-half mile west. A few years later school was conducted in a hall over a store in Ellsworth because of the distance to the country school. Garretson School was later sold to Alex Paxton, maker of the Paxton rake, who moved it to the town to use it as a shop. Enrollment in the town school increased rapidly. At one time when one hundred pupils were attending, many brought their own chairs.

In 1885 a two-room school was located south of the Christian Church on Lots 4 and 5 in Block 17, but the growing village of Ellsworth demanded a larger school building, so the present site was purchased from John H. Cheney in 1894 for \$700. The two-story frame building which was begun without delay has served since then and has been kept in excellent condition, having been remodeled at various times.

Records show that in 1903 two years of high school work were offered, while in 1905 a three-year program was instituted.

#### ELLSWORTH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL NO. 370

Within a short time after the passage of the 1919 Community High School Act there was a general movement to organize new high school districts. Ellsworth High School was established by vote on February 14, 1920. At first the upper rooms of the village school were rented for the use of the

high school. Though the school was well managed, much criticism came from the state inspectors about crowded conditions. After many years of arguments and study of high school needs, the present modern building was erected in 1939. The cost was about \$100,000, forty-five percent of which was paid by the U. S. Government through a plan to aid and encourage the building of schools. The new building has meant much to the community. On the board at the time were G. E. Banc, George O'Neill, James Tearney, C. O. Skaggs, and Lyle Stanger. In 1948 the Downs-Ellsworth District was organized. This new district included most of the rural schools in their respective high school areas.

#### EVANS SCHOOL (3) No. 98

When the original log school was abandoned in the late 1850s, a new building was constructed at the northeast corner on the east side of Section 31, about one mile northeast of the old school. Used until 1880 when the recent house was constructed, it has always been known as *Evans School* for William Evans, an early settler of that neighborhood. Well equipped and with its share of entertainments, spelling matches, and political meetings, Evans District was divided between the LeRoy and Downs-Ellsworth Units in 1948.

#### STUMPTOWN SCHOOL (2) No. 99

In 1852 a house built on the Runyan land across from Josiah Horr's farm was called the *Horr School*. Adelphia Sloan was the first teacher in this district. The group desiring the school in the center of the district won an election in 1878; and the schoolhouse was moved to the recent site eighty rods west of the northeast corner of Section 33. It has since been known as *Stumptown School*. A new building erected in 1885 was remodeled to meet requirement of standardization. For many years Stumptown was an interesting village of seventeen houses, but after the Lake Erie and Western Railroad was constructed to the north, several merchants moved to new towns on the railroad. The village of Stumptown then declined and was abandoned. Stumptown district is now a part of the Downs-Ellsworth Unit as of 1948.

#### LONE OAK SCHOOL (6) No. 100

In 1855 a schoolhouse was erected just south of Old Town Chapel a quarter mile east and one half mile north of the recent site. Later it was decided to move the school to the northeast corner of Section 35, the center of the district. When the house had been moved to the timber, Marcus Banks, the owner of the timber refused to have the trees cut to permit further moving, to there the school remained many years and was called the *Banks School*. Voters approved a new building in 1901. After much litigation, even in the Supreme Court, the road was opened from the west and a new house

was completed in 1903. With one hundred and eight trees at the last count, there is apparently no reason to call it *Lone Oak School*. Though enrollments were good in early years, attendance later decline and interest in the school lagged. It was incorporated into the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

CENTER SCHOOL (5) No. 102



HOECOMING AT STUMPTOWN SCHOOL, September 16, 1934, Ella F. Meiner, teacher, former teachers in foreground.

In 1862 a neat frame house, called Young School, was built on a lot donated by Isaac Young. David Wheeler was the first teacher; and later Mr. Young's son, William, taught there. After Mr. Young was gone, the school became *Center School* because it stood in the center of the district. Members of the Christian Church held Sunday school and meetings here before their church was built in Ellsworth. Center School boasted of many excellent teachers, and also had its share of poor ones. Remodeled in 1917, this is one of the few schools of the County that retained the high platform for the teacher's desk. Though helpful for giving plays, "the stage" if removed would necessitate the lowering of the blackboard. This district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

WHITE SCHOOL (4) No. 103

Spencer School, a small frame building on the Jonathan Spencer land, was just south of the recent site at the southeast corner of Section 18. Built in the early 1860s and burned in 1867, Mr. Spencer would not permit the rebuilding of the school at that location. So much feeling was aroused that

the northern sections organized a new district as No. 10, but they rejoined the original district the same year, 1868. The recent small frame house was erected and named *White School* for Uncle Jimmie White. George Yost was first teacher at Spencer, with Mary White serving as first teacher at White School. Enrollments were always large. Though an effort was made to move White School to Padua where many of the pupils lived, it failed. An extension was added in 1936 to the north end of the building, providing a library and an excellent stage. Grounds and equipment were well kept up by interested directors, with Frank Spencer and James Tearney worthy of special mention. Interest in community meetings of young and old resulted in some fine dramatic productions. The Downs-Ellsworth Unit absorbed White School in 1948.

#### BENTON SCHOOL (9) No. 104

This school's name comes from Benjaminville which was often referred to as Bentown. In the early 1860s subscription schools were held in Benjaminville where school was held first in part of a store, then at an old Quaker meeting house, and later in Benjamin's tenant house. Finally the school was built on the southeast corner of Section 6 in 1864. For some time the enrollment was high and there was much community interest, but with the decline of the village and the establishment of Holder, attendance decreased. The building and grounds were neglected for a time. More recently Bentown School was improved by an addition to the front and the sinking of an excellent well. Much interest was shown at homecomings. The district became a part of the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### FAIRTOWN SCHOOL (8) No. 105

Named for Fairtown, an early village one-half mile west of the school, the voters of the unorganized District No. 8 met and approved the organization of a new district. On February 19, 1866, D. O. Stout, F. LaRue, and Cary O'Neal were elected directors, following which an election was held March 19th to vote on a school site and on the right to levy a tax to build. Ten to two favored the tax, and nine to three voted for the locating of the school in the center of the district at the northwest corner of Section 10. The schoolhouse, built by Asher Merwin, cost \$400. Harrison M. Ham was the first teacher beginning December 17, 1866 for three months. Myra LaRue then taught a summer term of three months. A new house was erected in 1925, at a cost of \$3,000, with John Kitch of Ellsworth as contractor.

A wagon shop and store was conducted in Fairtown by Asher Merwin. George W. Wells and Merwin made one of the first riding cultivators at this place. Fairtown School was the only one in the County which boasted a wind-

mill. A very large and successful homecoming was held in 1934. The school merged with the Downs-Ellsworth District in 1948.



FAIRTOWN SCHOOL HOMECOMING, September 30, 1934.  
Pupils of then and "way back when".

#### • LONE STAR SCHOOL (7) No. 106

In 1863 a small house was built on the southwest corner of Section 1. Jonas Bane, Miss Hamin, and Joab Brigham were the early teachers of this school. In 1875 when the recent building was erected, the enrollment was just forty-five. Mary B. Weed was the first teacher in the new building, where she taught for many terms. The new, white painted house out on the lonely prairie suggested the name of *Lone Star School*. Though standardized in 1914, the enrollment became rather small. An unusually successful homecoming was held there in 1934 which was a fine testimony of the continuing interest of former teachers and pupils. The district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### *ARROWSMITH TOWNSHIP 23N-5E*

Named for its first supervisor, Ezekiel Arrowsmith, this township was almost all prairie for it contained only about one square mile of timber at the east end of Old Town near the Indian Fort and also a small patch of woods, called Smith's Grove, in Section 24. In the early 1830s sons of Jonathan Cheney laid claims to land in the southwest portion because of blue grass



HOECOMING AT LONE STAR SCHOOL, 1934 Persons in foreground attended the new school in 1875.

growing in that area. A few settlers followed the Cheneys but most of the township was not inhabited until some time later.

Some parts of Arrowsmith Township are hilly yet we find some excellent farm land. Early stages of the Sangamon River cut through the township from the west and the northeast part is drained by Bray's Creek. The Old Trail comes in from the east, just north of Smith's Grove where Joseph Smith settled in 1844. Down the Trail to the west, not far from the township line, was the postoffice of Senix with a store and a blacksmith shop. When Mr. Smith came to the grove, he noticed some peculiar earthworks and trenches, and found many antique bullets. Historians were notified but participants in the battle were not identified. In 1926 the writer visited the location and studied all historic accounts he could obtain. Upon obtaining recently discovered French records and maps, comparisons showed this to be the long sought location of the battle between the Fox Indians and the French in 1730, named by the Indians, Etnataek.

#### ARROWSMITH SCHOOL (5) No. 111

Center School was located one-half mile south of the present village of Arrowsmith. A schoolhouse, built in 1862 and burned in 1863, was immediately rebuilt with lumber hauled from Bloomington. James F. Payne, Reuben L. Porter, and James Crassen were the first directors. John Merritt

was the first teacher. After the village was platted and beginning to grow, a one-room school was erected there in 1875 west of the present one. The old house was then moved to town and remodeled for a residence. In 1882 a primary school was held in Mill's Hall on the present site of the bank. Another one-room school with a cupola was built in 1883 on the east line of the school site. These two one-room buildings later gave way to the beautiful four-room structure built in 1903 at a cost of \$8,000. This building served for both elementary and high school until the present high school was built in 1928. The rural schools of this township consolidated with Arrowsmith Grade School in 1947, as District No. 464.



BIRD HOUSE CONTEST AT ARROWSMITH, 1928.

#### ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 380

Organized in 1920 with a comparatively small enrollment, the high school board rented space in the grade school building until 1929 when the new high school was completed at a cost of about \$50,000. Serving as superintendent of the new building was C. K. Watkins. The Board of Education included J. C. Bess; Raymond Weber; L. E. Meiner, Sadie Cundiff, and E. D. Hess. An excellent high school has been maintained in spite of small enrollments.

#### BRUSH COLLEGE SCHOOL (1) No. 107

In a locust grove across the road to the south of the recent site at the

southwest corner of Section 29, the first school of this district was opened in 1859 in a log house. A small, bushy grove near the school suggested the name, *Brush College*. The crude original building had seats against the walls with desks for the older pupils and a row of seats in front without desks for the smaller children. A wood burning stove stood in the center of the room, while the teacher's desk was toward one end. Gordon Lilly\*, the famous "Pawnee Bill", taught there from 1877 to 1878. Enrollments were as high as eighty. A new building opened in the fall of 1878 was rebuilt and made standard in 1918. The school was consolidated with Arrowsmith Grade School in 1947.

#### COLUMBIA SCHOOL (2) No. 108

At the close of the Civil War, a frame house was built on the recent site at the southwest corner of Section 27. Painted brown, sand was showered



PLANTING CLASS TREES, 1929, Arrowsmith Community High School, C. K. Watkins, Superintendent.

\*Gordon Lilly, a seventeen-year old graduate of Bloomington High School, was shocking oats for Ezekial Arrowsmith during the summer of 1877 when one of the school directors remarked that the school would not be open the coming year because no teacher could be found to handle the "big boys". Mr. Lilly tendered his services as teacher, agreeing to charge nothing if he were not successful in conducting the school. The writer talked with Mr. Lilly when he returned to Bloomington for a visit in 1939 and questioned him concerning this early experience. Mr. Lilly assured him that he received every cent of his salary for teaching the school, thus proving his ability at an early age.

on the fresh paint to make it more durable, but the house then appeared as though it were covered with gnats. Two rows of handmade double seats were used in the school with an aisle down the center to separate the sexes. Although the name had been *Hougham School* for two prominent Hougham families in the district, the color now suggested *Brown School*. A new building erected in 1893 at the time of the Columbian Exposition in Chicago suggested the name, *Columbia*. This school enjoyed a good share of local interest and cooperation. It joined with the Arrowsmith Grade School in 1947.

#### PLAINVIEW SCHOOL (4) No. 110

A log house was located in the early 1850s on the south side of the trail west of the lane on the Jacob Smith farm. Just a few rods to the south was the site of the Arrowsmith battlefield, where the French and Indian allies defeated the Fox Tribe in a twenty-three day battle in 1730. Replaced by a frame building in 1860, the schoolhouse was moved to the recent site at the southwest corner of Section 13 in 1872. A larger house was built in 1882. Called *Smith School* for many years, the name, *Plainview School*, was suggested after the new house was erected on a lot surrounded by sixty-six maple trees and overlooking the countryside. A great homecoming was held at Plainview on the 25th of August 1940. Plainview School was consolidated with Arrowsmith in 1948.

#### SANGAMON SCHOOL (6) No. 112

Probably the first frame building used for school purposes in the township was a small house built at the northwest corner of Section 20. Having been sold to John Marsh in 1882 for \$30, the house was used as a cow barn. A much larger schoolhouse replaced it the same year. Sangamon School was the center for singing schools, spelling bees, and Sunday schools. It was remodeled and standardized in 1920. The headwaters of the Sangamon River flow a few rods to the east, thus the name, *Sangamon School*. It was consolidated with Arrowsmith Grade School in 1947.

#### CORNELL SCHOOL (7) No. 113

Originally built in the early 1860s on the north side of the road three-quarters of a mile west of the recent site on the land of Daniel Cornell. This building was moved to the new location in the northeast corner of Section 7. A new house was erected in 1873, which was remodeled enough to be called standard in 1920. It was frequently called *Stout School* for Ira A. Stout who lived north of the school and who later purchased the forty acres from which the site was taken. An oil burner was installed in 1938. The school merged with the Arrowsmith Consolidated School in 1947.

## BANE SCHOOL (8) No. 114

At the northwest corner of Section 10, the school site was originally owned by Bane Brothers, so it was called *Bane School*. The last district in the township to build, the schoolhouse had been in use for more than forty years, so it was rather dilapidated. After the directors had it remodeled and made modern, it could hardly be recognized as the same building. Samuel K. McDowell, for many years Superintendent of the Bloomington Schools, taught his first term at Bane in 1888. The district consolidated with the Arrowsmith Grade School in 1947. The building became a cornerrib.

## GREENWOOD SCHOOL (9) No. 115

After the Civil War a small frame house, known as Froelich School, was built on the land of Christian Froelich. In 1883 this house was moved away; the recent building was erected on a site across at the southwest corner of Section 1 to which a title was obtained. A small clump of bushes and a single tree growing on the site suggested the name, *Greenwood*. It joined the Arrowsmith Consolidated School in 1947. A neat residence was made from the old school.

## CHENEY'S GROVE TOWNSHIP 23N-6E

This township bears the name of Jonathan Cheney who settled there in 1825. The large timber area, watered by the Sangamon River and numerous springs, was attractive to early settlers as was the trail road coming over the high rolling prairie. Most of the soil was rather fertile.

The first log schoolhouse was built in 1830. The same year Robert Cunningham established a grist mill nearby on the Sangamon River. The early settlers were of the sturdy type, industrious and interested in religion and education. Until 1858 Cheney's Grove Precinct was the voting place for the eastern part of the County.

Saybrook has had county fairs and community sales, but the most interesting event for that area was the Centennial Celebration on August 26th and 27th in 1925, an event honoring the first settler of the grove, Jonathan Cheney. A log cabin was built for relics of the early days, a memorial was dedicated in the park, and a long parade depicted various epochs of the past century. Former residents of Saybrook community attended from far and near.

## SAYBROOK SCHOOL (5) No. 119

The first school in what is now Saybrook was a log house near the cemetery east of Brooklyn Bridge. Built in 1830, this school was supported by the subscription of two dollars per pupil for that term. In the early 1850s

a frame house was located about three blocks east of the log school at the site of the Methodist Church, and called *Tuffey School*, the name by which the village was known at that time.

Named for a town in Connecticut, Saybrook was platted in 1854. In 1864 the school directors and the Methodists went together to build a combined school and church, located in Block 51 now the east part of the park. Consisting of two stories, the upper room was the church auditorium while the lower one was partitioned to serve as class rooms. The school district bought the interest of the church in the early 1870s and remodeled the building making additional classrooms to accomodate increased enrollments. The result was a good frame building, known as *Saybrook Academy*. A two-year high school course was begun in 1886. The present brick school was erected in 1895 and housed both grade and high schools until 1928. A gymnasium was built near the west side of the school in 1911 but it has since been removed. Of recent years this has been one of our excellent grade schools. A consolidation of the schools of this Township was voted in March, 1949, and became District No. 484.

#### SAYBROOK COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 360

With the district organized in 1920, an election to issue bonds and select a site was held in 1921. The site was chosen but the proposition to issue bonds for building was defeated. Rooms for high school classes were leased at the local grade school building. Increased enrollment caused crowded conditions, not approved by the state in its requirements for high school recognition. Another vote was taken in 1928 and, in spite of bitter opposition, the bond issue and the right to build were carried. On November 12th of the same year the corner stone was laid with services planned by the Masonic Lodge. At the time of building the Board of Education consisted of Dr. J. B. Hazel, President; W. O. Butler, Secretary; Robert Coile, Frank Hubert, Guy Van Scyoc, members. The new school cost about \$65,000.

#### FOUR CORNERS SCHOOL (4) No. 116

This district comprised of the south end of Woodland District No. 3 and the west part of the Peg and Awl District was laid out in 1872. The pupils, however, continued to attend the latter school for two or more years until a building was erected near the northwest corner of Section 32. Designated as No. 4, the building at the crossroads in a short time was known as the *Four Corners School*. In 1923 the rather dilapidated house was remodeled by the construction of a basement with furnace and an entrance addition. Although at times the enrollment has been very small the school was rather

well equipped. Neighborhood interests and social activities have frequently made this school an interesting center of the community.

#### PLEASANT VALLEY SCHOOL (6, 7) No. 117

When Union District No. 6 was laid out in 1863, a narrow strip was taken from the south side of Hard Scrabble District No. 4 and a wider area of the same three-mile length was set off from Bellflower Township. A small frame schoolhouse was built on the Bellflower side of the new district. In 1870 the school was moved across into Cheney's Grove Township. The Bellflower side, long known as District No. 1, had organized for a school of its own. To make it more convenient for pupils, the house was moved in 1872 to a location in Section 33 on the south side of the trail road. Reorganized as District No. 7 with some new territory to the north and west, the school was known as *Peg and Awl* from a game which was popular with boys in early days. A few years later a house was built on the recent site on the Old Trail eighty rods northwest of the southeast corner of Section 34. The new location suggested the name, *Pleasant Valley School*. The building was raised and remodeled in 1923.



HOMECOMING AT EXCELSIOR SCHOOL, District No. 118, 1934. Squire A. C. Harper (center), a former teacher.

#### EXCELSIOR SCHOOL (4, 6) No. 118

In 1872 this district was organized from territory of Hard Scrabble

District No. 4; and a frame house was then erected two miles east of Saybrook. The log school of District No. 4 was abandoned as was the name. The new school with a promising future adopted the title of *Excelsior* which suggested higher or loftier ideals. Though remodeled several times, it is old and hard to keep in good condition. Yet *Excelsior* holds many pleasant memories as shown by the crowds attending its homecomings.

#### **BRUSH COLLEGE SCHOOL (8) No. 120**

When this district was established in 1872, the Woodland School one mile south was soon abandoned. Erected on the recent site in the woods near the creek at the north edge of the grove in Section 19, the name, *Brush College*, was quite appropriate for the neat frame building. The house and premises have been carefully tended and good equipment provided by the directors. An addition on the east side made the school building convenient and modern. *Brush College* held an interesting place in the social life of the community prior to the consolidation.

#### **HILSDALE SCHOOL (2, 3) No. 121**

District No. 2 included the northwest part of the township in 1858 when the first school was opened in that section. Located near the northwest corner of the McMackin farm not far from an excellent spring, it was called *McMackin School* until an itinerant tailor suggested *Dark Corner*, because it happened to be rainy and cloudy, when ever he came to that neighborhood. In 1873 the school was moved to the recent site at the northwest corner of Section 8. Looking from the school over the beautiful hills, Amos Means wrote *Hillsdale* on the blackboard of the new house which was built in 1882 and since then it has been known by that name.

In early times literary societies, Sunday schools, spelling bees, and last day exhibitions never to be forgotten made this a most interesting community center. An excellent brass band was organized there. To their last homecoming, a few years ago, W. C. Means, a former pupil and ex-county treasurer, brought the McLean County Drum and Fife Band, with which he played for many years. An interesting, well equipped school has been maintained in recent years, but the "good old days at Dark Corner" have always held the spotlight with Bill Means, our County citizen.

#### **CORN VALLEY SCHOOL (1, 2) No. 122**

In 1858 District No. 1 comprised nine sections or the northeast quarter of the township. A neat frame building was located on the northeast corner of Section 15. The many new farm homes along the road suggested the name of *Stringtown* for the school. The house was moved one mile west and one mile north to the recent site in 1873, where the low level fields of growing

corn yielded the title, *Corn Valley*. Erected eighty rods north of the southwest corner of Section 10, the late house was modernized and standardized during the period of school improvement, but the attendance became small. In a district early noted for its various community meetings and religious activities, homecomings have brought back descendants of sturdy "good old day" settlers in this section, *viz*: Coiles, Wills, Butlers, Hunters, and the Means families as well as Colonel A. C. Harper, a pioneer teacher.

#### WHITE HALL SCHOOL (1) No. 123

The three and one-half sections of this district were a part of the original District No. 1 which was divided by the reorganization of 1872. A well constructed frame house was erected on the east side of Section 11. Painted white as it stood out on the open prairie, it was only natural to call it *White Hall*, a name which has lingered through the years. In 1923 the school was remodeled to meet state requirements. A ventilating chimney built on the west end, a basement, and a furnace were among other improvements. Recently added equipment makes White Hall one of the better schools of the county. Iva McMackin has taught there for the past several years.

#### DANVERS TOWNSHIP 23N-6E

Danvers Township is located in the northwest corner of McLean County. A heavy growth of timber originally covered twenty sections to the north and to the west. The surface is high, slightly rolling and sloping enough for drainage. The prairie land is very fertile. In the northwestern part there is a group of hills of unusual beauty and magnitude.

Large timber tracts made this area attractive to early settlers, which accounts for the number who settled here at an early date. The grove was named for Ephraim Stout who came here in 1825.

Sturdy settlers, deeply interested in both religion and education, carried on church services and school classwork in many of the early homes. About 1830 the first schoolhouse was built at what is now Stout's Grove Cemetery. It was a typical log house, with a huge fireplace, greased paper windows, and heavy split log benches. Subscription schools met there for many years as did religious groups until they could build a church. This township was the first in the County to sell its school section, which brought \$834.80 in 1832. By 1850 the interest in education brought the organization of three districts for the Township. A log school was located near Mitchell School for the west district; a frame house in the town of Concord was used for the middle district; and a log house in the Hickory Ridge District served the east side. The state road, known as the Danville, Bloomington, and Pekin Stage Route,



DANVERS WAR GARDEN DEMONSTRATION PLOT, 1918.  
R. J. Williams, Superintendent of Schools.

and an early trail skirting the grove to the south added much to the convenience and interests of this section of McLean County.

#### DANVERS SCHOOL (4) No. 128

The town of Conecord was platted in 1836. A post office was established there in 1849 but for some reason was named Stout's Grove. In 1861 the post office department, in response to a petition, changed the name to Danvers, since Danvers, Massachusetts was the home of Isarel W. Hall an early promoter of the town. The first school was established in 1851, when a neat frame schoolhouse was located two blocks east of the present Presbyterian Church (Lot 3, Block 16). A two story frame building with two classrooms was built in 1864 on the site just east of the church. The fast growing town soon found these facilities inadequate, so the frame house was moved away in 1879 and used as a dwelling. A two-story brick building with three finished classrooms replaced the former building. In 1912 the school again became crowded, so the directors established a primary room in a building now used as the village library. Erected in 1915 at a cost of \$30,000, the present beautiful building had seven classrooms, an assembly, an office, a library, and useful rooms in the basement and was both neat and modern.

Since the early 1890s a program including high school work has been offered. A three-year high school course was handled by the principal alone

for many years, but an assistant was employed in 1915. Another high school teacher was added in 1920 and the middle of that year a music teacher was also placed on the faculty. Pupils from outside the high school district rapidly increased attendance. Though it offered only a three-year course, Danvers High School was rated high by state inspectors. Danvers, too, was the first grade school in McLean County to receive Superior rating.

#### DANVERS COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 330

Danvers Community High School District No. 330 was organized in 1938. At a cost of \$50,000 the present building was then enlarged on the south side to include rooms for the required vocational subjects as well as an assembly hall and an office. A Community Unit District composed of Danvers and fourteen rural schools was organized in 1948.



MOSQUITO GROVE SCHOOL, 1935, Myrtle Bode, teacher; and all-male enrollment.

#### MOSQUITO GROVE SCHOOL (1) No. 124

Prior to 1860 this district was much larger than at present. Early subscription schools had been held in the grove to the south. In 1855 a small frame house was located on the east side of the road in Section 32. Crude benches, a wood stove, and greased paper windows, for which glass was later obtained, made up the equipment for the early building. The schoolhouse, erected in 1866, boasted an enrollment of seventy-five in

1868, but lately only a few attended. An active community, which in early days always promoted Sunday schools and literary societies, recently supported an excellent Community Club. After complete remodeling, the school was rededicated on August 30, 1936. Frank Ayres, a Chicago attorney and former teacher, was speaker for the event. The district was included in the Danvers Community Unit, but petitioned into Stanford Consolidated District in 1948.

Named for the grove to the south, the origin of this name is very interesting. A number of stock drivers in need of feed for their horses called on Mr. Walters at the Grove. In the course of the conversation, one of them asked, "What do you call this country?" The old man hesitated, then replied "Well, let's name it 'Mosquito Grove'". The insects had been rather numerous the previous night. "It is often called "Skeeter Grove".

#### DEMENT SCHOOL (6) No. 125

In 1856 a frame house was placed on the recent site, on the east side of Section 28 with the districts of the township laid out then with but few later changes. A trail from the southwest passed the schoolhouse to join the road which led to the north from Bloomington to Pekin. The original building served until 1871 when the later house was erected. Another house, 12x14 feet and located in the southwest corner of the lot at the same time, was intended for four negro children then in the district. A teacher was also employed for the colored school to which two of the children came. The Rev. James A. Chase, a Presbyterian minister in that section of the county, filed a suit against Daniel Stephenson and the other directors, to restrain them from building the small school. The building, however, was completed before an injunction was filed. An amended bill was then filed to prevent the conducting of the school and the paying of the teacher. The directors were upheld by the McLean County Courts, but the Supreme Court reversed the decision. The principal point in the court decision was as follows: "There is now ample room in the recently erected schoolhouse to accommodate all the children of the district".

Remodeled in 1930 by adding a basement, indoor toilets, and making other changes, Dement became one of the most convenient rural schools. For some time they enjoyed an excellent community club. The origin of the district's name is unknown. It joined the Danvers Unit in 1948.

#### EAST WARLOW SCHOOL (5) No. 126

In 1865 a plot of land was obtained on which the recent small frame house was erected in the eastern part of Section 36. At no time was the enrollment large and as a result improvements and equipment were neglected. The grounds were treeless because the School Board did not feel that they had

the right to plant trees. Later the house was remodeled, nicely equipped, trees set out, and the grounds made attractive. Lack of pupils caused the school to be closed for many years. It consolidated with the Danvers Community Unit in 1948. The school was named for J. B. Warlow, and, to distinguish it from another in Allin Township, this was *East Warlow School*.

#### HICKORY RIDGE SCHOOL (10) No. 127

Around 1850 a log school was erected on the west side of the third principal meridian, a location about forty rods east and south of the recent site. The small hill covered with shell bark hickory trees, where the school was started, suggested the name *Hickory Ridge School*. Serving the east side of Danvers Township and the west side of Dry Grove Township for a long time, the log house was supplanted by a frame house. The frame schoolhouse was moved later to the northwest where it stood on the south side of the southernmost street of the platted village of Wilkesborough. Very large early enrollments contrast strikingly with the small number in attendance in later years. It became a part of the Danvers Unit in 1948.

#### STOUT'S GROVE SCHOOL (3) No. 129

About 1856 a house located south of the trail and north of Sugar Creek was called *McClure School*, named for H. C. McClure, who lived just across the road and kept a tavern. The school was moved three-quarters of a mile west in 1891 to the present site near the west side of Section 15 and was then called *Stout's Grove* for the settlement and the grove that covered a large part of the township. A new house of concrete block construction was opened February 6, 1916. Though as many as sixty pupils were enrolled at one time, in 1920 the school was closed for five months because there were but two pupils in the district. The name of *Owl Hollow* has also been applied to this school. It consolidated with the Danvers Unit in 1948. Pupils of grades one to six now attend there.

#### MITCHELL SCHOOL (2) No. 130

Soon after early settlements in this community, schools and religious meetings were held in the schoolhouse. Three schoolhouses, including at least one built of logs, have been erected not far from the recent location near the west side of Section 20 on the south side of the trail, now paved Route 164. In 1851 Mitchell District included the west part of the township but the size has been about the same since 1860. Remodeled at times and always well-equipped, the building was blown off its foundation but it was repaired without delay and used again. It has always been known as *Mitchell School* for E. B. Mitchell, a pioneer and valuable citizen. The district became a part of the Danvers Unit in 1948.

## FIFER SCHOOL (8) No. 131

About two acres of school grounds include many beautiful forest trees. After 1855 a brick building, facing south, was located toward the east end of the lot at the center of Section 8. Brick and later tile were then made in that community. Methodists held meetings there when school was not in session. A windstorm destroyed the building in 1911; and a new building was then erected at the west end of the lot near the road. Although not completely modern, it was convenient and well-constructed, with very good equipment. Previously known as *Brick School*, the new building was called *Fifer School* because Governor Fifer at one time lived in that neighborhood. In 1940 the school was closed and pupils transported to other schools. The district joined the Danvers Unit in 1948.

## FRANKS SCHOOL (9) No. 132

In the early 1860s a frame house was located on the recent site eighty rods south of the center of Section 3. About 1882 a new house was erected, which was remodeled later and improved in many ways. Equipment was above average, for which the district is indebted to several interested and progressive directors. Always called *Franks School* for J. Franks, who lived north of the school, some wished to call it *Brush Hook School* but that name did not linger. The district was included in the Danvers Unit in 1948.

## SWAMP SCHOOL (7) No. 133

In the early 1860s a school was located about eighty rods east of the recent location. The ground was low, so it is not difficult to see why the name, *Swamp School*, was applied, though there was no reason for such choice of site unless a trail or road, since closed, ran near there. The recent site, eighty rods south of the northwest corner of Section 12, was selected about 1906. The first "Community Club" in the county was organized at this school in 1914, with a definite, planned program for the year. Rural schools had sponsored spelling bees, lyceums, literary societies, and other similar activities. Although the building was well-maintained, the enrollment became small. The school consolidated with the Danvers Unit in 1948.

## PLEASANT RIDGE SCHOOL (4) No. 184

Six sections of land comprised the first district. The first schoolhouse was a log building erected during the 1840s on a hill northeast of the recent site—the highest point in the neighborhood. Trees that surrounded the first log schoolhouse were so large that pegs were driven in them to which horses were tied. The log building was used until 1856 when a frame building was erected south of the hill east of the Williams' residence. This house was moved in 1866 to the recent one-half acre site at the northwest corner of

the southwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 29, purchased from Anton Indlekofer for \$2. A new building was erected in 1883.

Records show: In 1879 a twenty-year old pupil attended the school. In 1895 Sadie Hall received \$30 per month as a teacher; the highest salary, \$175 per month, was paid in 1947 to Frances Webb. Calvin B. Anthony was the first teacher hired for a full term from September to May, 1903. Prior to that time there had been fall, winter, spring terms. The largest school enrollment on record was forty-three in 1881 while the smallest was eight pupils in 1937 when Miss Forney taught there. Over a period of forty years the average school attendance was twenty-five pupils. Among teachers of this school were Henry Peter Hall and Victoria Fifer.



MAY DAY AT PLEASANT RIDGE SCHOOL, 1898. Sara Hall (Mrs. Forsyth), teacher. (Photo courtesy of John D. Walter)

Located on the most rugged terrain in the County, an area of beautiful scenery, there is no question about the ridge and the school has been pleasant through the years, so it was called *Pleasant Ridge*. Many large homecomings have been held there. The district merged with the Danvers Unit in 1948.

#### STRUBHAR SCHOOL (6) No. 185

In the last district in the Township to be organized, the house was built about 1870 at the southeast corner of Section 28. Valentine Strubhar lived southeast of the school so it was known as *Strubhar School*. Though the valuation of this district is low, building and equipment have been maintained

in fair condition. Some excellent teachers serving there made the school an interesting one. A lone oak tree has stood in the yard through the years as a silent reminder of the timber that once covered that section. The school became a part of Danvers Unit District in 1948.

#### COTTAGE GROVE SCHOOL (5) No. 186

Rather small and of frame construction, the first schoolhouse in this district was built on the Vance Prairie one-half mile west and a quarter south of the present site. In 1859 a new school was located across the road to the east, but it was moved in 1899 to the present site, giving the old lot to Rock Creek Fair Grounds. Situated on the Ewins land, it was frequently called *Ewins School*, but timber nearby suggested the name, *Cottage Grove*. The new modern tile block house with excellent equipment was dedicated April 14, 1926. Small enrollments caused the school to close in recent years. The district joined the Normal Unit in 1948, then withdrew and merged with the Danvers Unit the same year. The building is now used for grades one to six.

#### DRY GROVE TOWNSHIP 24N-1W

Dry Grove Township received its name from the grove in the southwestern part which stands on high ground with only a few headwater brooks, thus earning the title, Dry Grove. To the southeast another wooded area of almost equal size suggested the name, Twin Grove. These two groves on the south side of the township offered desirable places for early pioneer settlements. Peter McCullough, whose son, William, became prominent in our County, settled there in 1825. Jacob and George Hinshaw, Benjamin Beeler, Ormond Robinson, John Enlow, Eleazer Munsell, Stephen Webb, and many others followed to share the hardships of the early days. The stage route, westward emigration, and travel on the state road brought much activity, especially the "Gold Rush" in 1849. Twin Grove Mill, or King's Mill, on Sugar Creek had blacksmith, wagon and other repair shops, as well as food supplies. Farther west on the north side of the road, McCullough had a tavern.

The first school was held in the cabin home of Jacob Hinshaw in Section 29. The first log school in the township was built in the 1830s east of Sugar Creek in Section 33, north of the township line not far from the corner. About 1837 another log school was built on the west edge of Dry Grove in the northeast corner of Section 30, and in the west half of the old cemetery. This house burned in 1845. A log schoolhouse was then built at East Twin Grove Cemetery in 1847.

## TWIN GROVE SCHOOL (2) No. 134

The first school of Dry Grove Township was held in a log house near the southeast corner of Section 33; and a few years later another log house was located on the first hill to the north on the east side of the creek. Water was obtained from a spring to the southwest. A teacher, disappointed at not being employed, burned the school in 1853. A small frame building replaced it in 1855 on the west side of the cemetery one mile west, but was moved in 1886 to the recent site forty rods to the south. A larger frame building was erected there in 1894, remodeled at times, and kept in good repair through the years. A district, which has had many community interests from the early days to the present, it is distinctive in that several families have lived in this section for three generations. Twin Grove School homecomings have always been well attended. The district joined the Danvers Unit in 1948.

## MUNSELL SCHOOL (7) No. 135

A district of ten and one-half sections selected a school site at what is now the East Twin Grove Cemetery, but this district was divided in 1857, giving Munsell District the north six sections while the sections to the south were organized into Spaulding District. Daniel Munsell donated the triangular lot at Twin Grove on which a frame house was built at that time, and was used almost fifty years. The present building was erected in 1906, and later improvements were made, making it more convenient and modern. With enrollments above the average rural school, community interest was very commendable. The district was taken into the Normal Unit in 1948. The building is now used for grades one to six.

## BELVIDERE SCHOOL (6) No. 136

The first schoolhouse was built in 1858 a quarter mile east of the present Yuton Station near the creek, a location which was then the center of the district. The building, not painted and furnished with crude home-made benches, was then known as the *Swamp School*. In 1869 a new building was erected near the trail to the northwest just south of the Mt. Zion Church on the east side of the road, a quarter mile north of Yuton. The district voted June 8, 1901, to move the school to the recent site, one-half mile south of Yuton. In 1908 the old school building was replaced by a new building with a basement, which was standardized in 1922. For many years former pupils and teachers have enjoyed annual reunions. The district consolidated with the Normal Unit in 1948.

## CENTER SCHOOL (9) No. 137

The district organized in 1860 erected a neat frame house eighty rods west of the southeast corner of Section 15. Called *Halifax School*, this house served for twelve years until it was destroyed by fire in 1872. The recent house was then built and the grounds were enlarged from a half acre to an acre. Rated as one of the good schools because community interest resulted in completion of needed improvements and obtaining good teachers, Center School had many interesting neighborhood gatherings. Their parent-teacher group was of material value to the school. The district was divided between the Danvers and Normal Units in 1948.

## DRY GROVE SCHOOL (3) No. 138

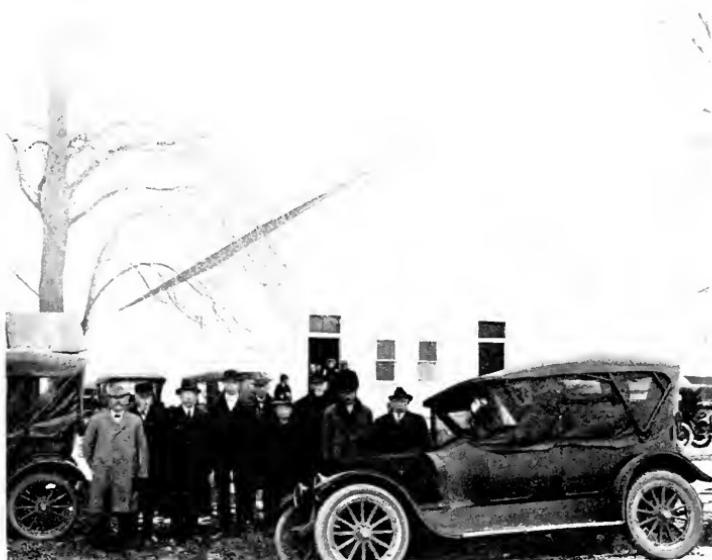
In 1846 the present site on Lot 1 of the northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 29 was donated by Peter McCullough for a school to serve all children of Dry Grove community. The house, 18x20 feet, was built of rough sawed walnut and the commonly used benches faced the wall. Named for the grove in which it was located, the present district was laid out in 1862. The next year a neat frame house, larger and better equipped with handmade benches and desks, replaced the former school. Records show that the construction contract for the schoolhouse was let to William Martene for \$180. With better equipment added as the times demanded, this building was used for forty-seven years until the present house was built in 1910 to meet the standard requirements of the time. Because the community has held many of the original families, local interest and cooperation has made Dry Grove School one of the best, as evidenced by meetings and clubs which have been of value to the entire district. In 1938 \$2000 in bonds was voted for a basement, indoor toilets, and other modern improvements. The school joined the Danvers Unit in 1948.

The building is being used for grades one to six.

## GRANT SCHOOL (4) No. 139

In 1855 a small frame building was erected on the prairie, one-half mile west and one-quarter mile south of the recent site west of the southeast corner of Section 8. Since it was located on George Swallow's land, the school, with its crude benches, blackboard, and large wood stove, was known as the *Swallow School*. An early teacher spent most of the time with singing and penmanship. In 1868 the school became crowded so it was voted to build a larger house at the recent location. The new school was named in honor of President Grant. A cooperative community with many activities resulted in well equipped schools through the years. The house was kept

modern, including a basement and other improvements added in 1934. In 1948 the district became a part of the Danvers Unit District, using the building for grades one to six.



SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AT GRANT SCHOOL,  
December, 1917. Pupils of the first school in the foreground.

#### CRESCENT SCHOOL (12) No. 140

Organized in 1893, Carlock Grade School District included territory of both Chapel and Bunker Hill Districts in White Oak Township, thus forcing them to be abandoned. Three sections—Chapel District's Section 6, Bunker Hill's Sections 4 and 5—in this township made up the new District No. 12, for which a house was built at the southeast corner of the northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5. Nothing about the school or the district show any reason for the name, *Crescent*, though it was sometimes called *Engle School* for Jacob Engle who owned the land on which it stood. Here was the only rural school in the county located in a pasture where the livestock roamed at will and mowed the yard. Crescent was well equipped and interesting, although at times the enrollment was very small. The district joined the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### DIAMOND SCHOOL (8) No. 141

In the early 1860s this district consisted of nearly five and one-half sections. Located in the northeast corner of Section 10, the school was then

convenient for most of the pupils but was far from the center of the district. In 1894 three and a half sections were detached to organize the Garfield School District. The original school, however, continued to function as a school in spite of having only a section and a half of territory. Disbanded in 1896 after a bitter struggle to hold on, the house was sold and remodeled as a tenant residence. For fifty years this was the only rural schoolhouse in the county to remain on the original site when no longer owned by the district. No longer a "Diamond" on the prairie, it is now only a silent reminder of happy days to many who attended there.



GARFIELD SCHOOL, 1925, at the close of a pleasant day. Myra Kohler, teacher.

#### GARFIELD SCHOOL (11) No. 142

Organized in 1894 from the east four sections detached from Diamond District No. 8, the present brick building was then erected at the southwest corner of Section 1, and two years later the remainder of District No. 8 was attached. The school has been well equipped and remodeled in recent years, making it modern and very convenient. As was true at many other schools, it was necessary to go down very deeply for water, but the pumping was too hard for small children so the problem was solved by installing an electric motor driven pump. A spirit of cooperation, locally and in county-wide activities, has always been shown by the Garfield Club. Not only the

women of the district belong but past teachers and former residents have helped to make this one of the best organizations of its kind in the state. The school was named for the late President James A. Garfield. The Normal Unit District included this district in 1948.

#### *NORMAL TOWNSHIP 24N-2E*

Located just north of Bloomington, Normal Township has a slight ridge crossing the center of the township and forming a divide for the small streams. Waters which flow north drain into Six Mile Creek and those flowing toward the south drain into the basin of Sugar Creek. There are some medium hills in the south, the center, and the west, on which the soil is mostly brown silt loam. In the northeast and southeast areas the surface is rather flat with much black clay loam. The only timbered area was Major's Grove near the southern border. Few settlers went out on the prairie until after 1850 although much of the land had been entered earlier for speculation. Establishment of the village of North Bloomington in 1854 at the junction of the new railroads—Illinois Central and Chicago and Alton—provided a local market and marked the beginning of the town of Normal. Nurseries that had been started in this area were soon furnishing trees to all central Illinois. Many trees were planted in Normal and Bloomington, giving Bloomington the title, "Evergreen City."

Illinois State Normal University was established in 1857 and the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home was dedicated in 1869. Both had much to do with the growth of the town of Normal which was incorporated in September of 1865. In 1867 the General Assembly granted a special charter to the town of Normal and a school district to include a territory two miles square.

#### *NORMAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS (2) No. 144*

The first public school of Normal was held in 1856 in a small frame building owned by Jesse Fell. When the public school was abandoned in 1860, children attended the Model School of the University. Foreseeing that the district must soon make provision for the education of the increasing number of pupils within the limits, an election was held in 1865, by which it was voted to erect a building at the corner of School and Ash Streets at a cost of \$13,600. Later enlarged to include high school classes, for some reason, this building was called the *Old Ark*. In 1867 Normal became a special charter district; and the union with the University was dissolved. In 1884 a building was located at the corner of School and Mulberry Streets and a two-room school, now known as the Bernardine Smith School, was built on the west side

in 1892. Central School supplanted the two older buildings on that site in 1914, and Eugene Field School on the east side was completed in 1936.

Illinois State Normal University and the Normal Public School District effected another union in 1901, whereby the Model School of the University became a part of the public school system of Normal, a plan which continued until 1906. In 1895 a three year course was adopted for the high school and the high school was duly accredited with a four-year program in 1897.



JUDGING NORMAL GARDEN CLUB EXHIBIT, 1918, now known as the Alice Jean Patterson Club.

#### NORMAL COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 348

Normal Community High School District No. 348 was organized in 1920. Members of its Board of Education were J. C. Aldrich, Roy Bates, T. H. Keys, E. J. Metcalf, and George D. Otto. High school work was continued at Central until the beautiful new building on Kingsley Street was constructed, the dedication of which was held October 25, 1928. Increased enrollments were better accommodated and a more attractive school program, including vocational agriculture, was offered. Additional territory, including Hudson Township, was added to the district in 1938 and transportation was then provided for all rural pupils. In 1948 Community Unit District No. 5 was organized to include Normal, Towanda, Hudson, Carlock, and more than thirty rural

schools. Twenty-five of these rural schoolhouses were sold at auction in April, 1949.

#### ROSE HILL SCHOOL (1) No. 143

After 1855 pupils from this area attended school in a frame building at the southwest corner of Hovey and Cottage Avenues. At that time young people from the west side of Normal, and the north edge of Bloomington were accommodated. When Normal Township was laid out in districts in 1864, a brick schoolhouse was built at the southeast corner of Section 30 and the old schoolhouse was torn down. Wild roses were growing in profusion on the new site so someone suggested *Rose Hill* as a name for the new school. The brick school was destroyed by a windstorm in 1899. The recent neat frame building was erected the next year and provided with a basement and other modern equipment. An excellent school spirit has been shown at times. Rose Hill was affiliated with Illinois State Normal University as a training school for rural teachers from 1927 to 1930. Some years ago the school grounds were landscaped. The district joined the Normal Unit District in 1948.

#### KING SCHOOL (3) No. 145

In the early 1860's a house, called *Sugar Creek College* was located on a triangular tract on the north line of Section 35 west of the Towanda Road. After this house burned in 1884, it was decided not to build near the Illinois Central Railroad again, so voters of the district selected a site on the corner  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the northeast. Since the erection of the new building in 1885, it became known as the *King School* for Capt. S. Noble King who resided to the southeast of the school. Remodeled in 1925, with an addition for a library, King School ranked as one of the most modern and well-equipped rural schools in the County. A small enrollment caused the school to be closed. Construction of the belt line of Route 66 caused removal of the building to the east across the old road to the northwest corner of the King Farm. The school was included in the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### GROVE SCHOOL (4) No. 146

Around 1866 a small frame house was built on the northeast corner of Section 23 for at that time the road to the south was not open. The recent building, which is much larger, was erected in 1891 and the old schoolhouse was moved away. The name, *Grove*, comes from the beautiful grove of maple trees on the grounds, though it is often called *Gregory School* for members of the Gregory family who have resided near since the first school was built. Among the first to be standardized, it was remodeled upon its affiliation with Illinois State Normal University for the training of rural teachers, a plan

which existed from 1936 to 1940. Excellently equipped, Grove was the only rural school with a mounted bell. Some years ago when the belfry was blown off, the bell was placed over an entry-way built at the east door. While the enrollment had been small for some time, the building was so badly damaged by a tornado in 1945 that pupils were transferred to a nearby district. It is now a part of the Normal Unit as of 1948.



LITTLE RED SCHOOL, 1936. Lucile Murray, teacher.

#### LITTLE RED SCHOOL (5) No. 147

The first public school in this district was held in the root cellar of the Overman and Mann Nursery with Miss Helen Fisk as teacher. Located one-half mile north of Normal on Linden Street, the new 28x34 foot house with a twelve foot ceiling was completed in the spring of 1861. The high basement was to be utilized as root cellar for nearby nurserymen. Frances Washburn taught a term; then Sarah E. Beers served for four very successful years. Trains carrying soldiers to fight in the Civil War passed to the rear of the school. Patriotism ran high.

For some reason the house was painted red although most of the time it had been white. A few years ago, however, it was again decorated red, so that the name, *Little Red School*, became very evident. From early times community interest included every thing from Sunday schools, spelling bees, and singing classes to community clubs and homecomings. The school is

well equipped and very much up to date. In 1948 the voters approved joining the Normal Unit. Grades one to six are taught here.

A great number of pupils from Little Red School became rather famous. Edmund J. James, son of the Reverend Colin D. James, was president of the University of Illinois for fifteen years. James R. Mann, son of William H. Mann, served for many years as Representative in Congress. Frank I. Mann, his brother, was a scientific agriculturalist. Albert H. Overman invented and manufactured the Victor bicycle. Elmer Ellsworth Brown served on the faculty of the University of California and later became the U. S. Commissioner of Education. August Hazenwinkle became the noted actor whose stage name was Carl Haswin. The McMurrays—Frank, Charles, and Lida—were a family of noted educators. Rudolph Reeder was also an educator. Three who became McLean County sheriffs were Vinton E. Howell, 1890, Henry H. Swaim, 1886, and James Reeder, 1910 and 1930. Mary McDermott, a graduate of Little Red School, taught in McLean County schools for thirty-seven years.

#### PICKETT SCHOOL (6) No. 148

In 1867 a neat frame house was built on the north side of the road about eighty rods west of the recent site at the southwest corner of Section 17. First known as No. 6, the building was moved to the corner in 1871 and called *Mast School*. A most interesting part in early community life was assumed by this district in cooperation with Maple Grove and Diamond Schools through literary societies. The development of many prominent men including: Clarence Baldridge, Governor of Idaho; Lloyd Ramseyer, president of Bluffton College; and many others is attributed to this early influence. A much larger building was erected in 1900 and the old house was moved to the farm to the southwest where it now stands. The new school was named *Pickett* for a general prominent in the Civil War. An excellent, well-furnished school was maintained though attendance dwindled until with but four pupils the school was temporarily closed in 1945. The district joined with the Normal Unit in 1948.

The "Silver Leaf Club", made up from Pickett, Garfield, and Belvidere communities, has conducted instructive and entertaining programs for many years. However, the intense excitement of competitive spelling matches and debates of early days is lacking.

#### WEST POINT SCHOOL (7) No. 149

In 1863 a rough frame building located on the southwest corner from the recent site was erected, with handmade benches, coal piled in one corner of

the room, and the only school equipment was a poker, a coal bucket, and a shovel. The recent house was built on the southwest corner of Section 5 in 1876. Standardized in 1913, West Point was further improved by the addition of toilets and indoor fuel storage. After much effort a good deep well was obtained to replace the cistern water supply. By its good equipment and excellent cooperation from the patrons, it was rated as a good rural school. The name, *West Point*, designated the school's location in the western part of the township, though it was often called *Schad School* because of its location on the land of Joseph Schad. This district became a part of the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### HARMONY SCHOOL (8) No. 150

Built in 1860 to the west of the recent location at the northwest corner of Section 10, the schoolhouse was moved in 1868 to the recent site, where it was placed on a good foundation, repaired, and painted white. Previously known as District No. 8., it was now called *White School*, a name that continued in use until 1879 when the site was purchased and definitely settled. Since then it has been *Harmony School*. The old house was becoming dilapidated so in 1927 the directors followed a plan suggested by the County Superintendent of Schools to raise and remodel the school at a cost of \$2000. The result was a neat and convenient building. An interesting school, Harmony's meetings contributed much to the social life of the district. The school joined with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### SIX MILE SCHOOL (9) No. 151

The recent school building at the southwest corner of Section 1 was built about 1868 and served the district for more than seventy-five years. Continuous remodeling not only kept it up to date, but made it very comfortable and convenient. The large chimney rebuilt in the south provided for a ventilating furnace; extra windows on the west fulfilled the lighting requirements; and an addition on the north provided toilets and a kitchen. The classrooms had modern equipment; and a deep well supplied good water; and interested boards of directors employed good teachers. Their community club was active and valuable to the district. Because the school was six miles from the business district of Normal, it was called *Six Mile School*, a name which was also given the creek that flows just back of the school yard. The school was included in the Normal Unit District in 1948.

#### TOWANDA TOWNSHIP 24N-3E

Towanda Township, the geographical center of McLean County, was named for the village of Towanda which was platted in 1854. Most of the

surface is slightly undulating, though a few hills attend Money Creek as it flows across the township from the southeast. The southwestern section lies on a moderate ridge that forms a divide between Sugar Creek and the Mackinaw basin. The fertile soil consists of silt loam and black clay loam types. Timber areas are Smith's Grove, north of the center of the township, and the southern tip of Money Creek timber on the north side of the township.

Smith's Grove was named for David Smith who came there in 1830. A log schoolhouse built there a few years later served as both school and church for a long time. The village of Towanda on the only railroad was the post-office for a large surrounding area. A flour mill flourished and several stores did rushing business in Towanda in pioneer days. The Tilbury Tile Factory furnished tile for draining many roads and ponds in the County. Completion of the Kankakee branch of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1883, with the new stations at Merna and Barnes, meant nereby markets for the entire township. When the prairie was opened for settlement many sturdy Irish farmers located in this township. A Catholic Church was built near the recent Merna School in the early 1870s, but the building was later moved to Merna, the location of the present St. Patrick's Church.

#### TOWANDA SCHOOL (2) No. 158

Towanda was founded in 1854, the year following the construction of the Chicago and Alton Railroad through that territory. Towanda, like other settlements, had subscription schools, but in 1859 a one-room frame house was rented where school was conducted. The building was also used for public meetings and the enlistment of soldiers for the Civil War. In 1863 a one-room building was begun on the present site but when half completed, it was mysteriously destroyed by fire. Classes were held on the second floor of Road-night Hall on Main Street until 1867 when a four-room frame school was erected on the present site. Only two teachers were employed until a two-year high school course was adopted in 1894, classes for which were conducted in an upstairs room. In 1906 the high school was extended to three years and was increased to four years in 1911. The building now in use was constructed in 1913, and the addition on the north and the gynnasium were built in 1932.

#### TOWANDA COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 420

District No. 420, comprising approximately forty-three sections of land, was organized in the spring of 1938. With a small attendance, it was impossible to offer some courses the community desired. Most of the areas of this district joined the Normal Unit District No. 5 when it was organized in 1948.

At present the building is used for grade school pupils while the high school students are transported to Normal.

#### BARNES SCHOOL (5) No. 152

In 1865 a small frame building was erected near the present site of the Illinois Central section house at Barnes Station, but in 1881 this house was moved to its new location north of the railroad. The name, *Barnes*, comes from Calvin Barnes who owned the entire section of land on which the school and Barnes Station are located. During the period of standardization the house was remodeled to meet all requirements. After 1930 an enclosed entrance was added and later electric lights. Though rather small, Barnes School was well equipped and a very good school maintained. The district consolidated with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### BALLARD SCHOOL (6) No. 153

In the early 1860s a small frame building was put up on the recent site at the northwest corner of Section 34. This house served until 1869 when it was moved to a nearby farm when the recent house was built. This neat white school on the hill was a landmark on the prairie. As children, we always heaved a sigh of relief when it was passed for it meant half the weary trip to Bloomington had been covered. Remodeled in 1915 with an addition for fuel and toilets, this was the first rural school in the county to install a jacketed stove (Smith Heater). Frank and Harve Ballard were nearby land-owners, so it has always been called *Ballard School*. The district became a part of the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### MERNA SCHOOL (4) No. 154

For two years a school was conducted in a shanty on the south side of the road one-half mile west of the recent site. Mr. McGrew, who raised broom corn nearby, had used the house for his hired men. In 1869 the recent building was erected on the northeast corner of Section 35. Known then as *Hanley School*, later as *Kerwin School*, and since Merna was established in 1881 it has been *Merna School*. Though the school has always had a large enrollment, it was especially heavy in the early days. After corn "shucking" season the big boys would come to school. Fighting and promoting fights was the order of the day. In 1915 the house was remodeled. Again in 1928, it was raised much higher, faced toward the east and an addition built for an entrance and coat room. The school had excellent equipment and a record of good school work. The district joined the Normal Unit in 1948.



MERNA SCHOOL, District No. 154, 1917. Ella T. Moore, teacher.

#### PHOENIX SCHOOL (3) No. 155

The school trustees allotted the new District No. 3 seven sections of land; and since most of the residents were then living in the southern part of the district, a small house was put up at McDonald's Corner just north of Money Creek at the southwest corner of Section 13 about 1867. A few years later when the north section was completely settled, there was a demand to have the school in the center of the district. The proposition to move the school one and a half miles north was put to vote, but was lost through the votes of two hired men. Much feeling arose. One night a group of the opposition put the school on skids and had it about half way to the recent site when they gave up the task. The directors completed the moving. The house was replaced in 1875 by a much larger one and was remodeled in 1915 to meet the new standard requirements. A few years later it was improved by the addition of a basement and the rearrangement of the entrance and coatrooms. Telephone and electric lights had been added recently. This well equipped school once had an enrollment of eighty.

In the days of spelling bees and Lyceums this school was a leader. When William Merna was the teacher at Phoenix and a Mr. Raney at Union School, Phoenix School received the following challenge from Union School: "Come spell us down! You use Swinton's, we use McGuffey's, once



PHOENIX SCHOOL, District No. 155, 1917. Josephine Hayes, teacher.

out of each book." Great days! Granville Swett, a brother of Leonard the lawyer, lived in Phoenix District. He was an educated man who did much to foster the progressive spirit in those early days. The Elvins, Mernas, and Carmodys deserve mention for their interest in education and the community.

The school was granted a Superior Rating in 1938. For some time the district maintained a nine months' school term. After the night moving episode it was called *Run Away School*, until Miss Merna named the newly built schoolhouse, *Phoenix*, possibly from the plate above the door placed there by the Insurance Company. The district merged with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### SMITH'S GROVE SCHOOL (1) No. 156

In the early days a log schoolhouse, built by the residents of the grove, served for school and for public meetings. The recent small building was erected south of the cemetery after the districts were laid out in 1855, remodeled in 1918, and later improved by an entrance addition. The school was well equipped with an up-to-date yard and playground. The pupils enjoyed the hickory nuts for only hickory trees remained in the school yard. The Grove was named for David Smith who settled there. Many farmers in and around the Grove have been prominent in the raising of good livestock. A

Presbyterian congregation was organized at the Smith's Grove School in 1856. The school became a part of the Normal Unit District in 1948.



SMITH'S GROVE SCHOOL, closing day picnic, April 27, 1930.  
Irene Wissmiller, teacher.

#### BURFIELD SCHOOL (7) No. 157

After the district was organized in 1865, A. W. Waldon, Joseph Chorn, and Smith Sawyer were elected directors, Mr. Sawyer served continuously for forty-five years. Since the official designation District No. 7 was not distinctive enough for the community and cockleburs grew without much restraint in some nearby fields, it was natural to refer to the new school as *Burfield Academy*. The name, Burfield, has lingered but the modern farmers have taken care of the burs. After the frame building had served the district for sixty-one years, a new brick veneer schoolhouse was constructed on the site at the southeast corner of Section 18 costing \$6000. This new rural school built in 1927 was one of the finest in the County. It was well equipped with an electric water pump, a fan system of ventilation, and with many other helps and conveniences for the teacher, Henry Sutter, Conrad Schaeffer, and Frank Kraft were directors when the new school was built.

Of recent years the enrollment of the school has been rather small, but an interested community has carefully maintained the new building and

grounds. The district joined the Normal Unit District in 1918, and the house was sold for \$3810 to be used as a residence.

#### *BLUE MOUND TOWNSHIP 24N-4E*

A large hill in the southwestern part of this township viewed from a distance through the blue haze of autumn suggested the name, Blue Mound. This township was a part of the vast prairie without a single tree, but made beautiful in the spring and summer by miles of waving grass and an endless profusion of wild flowers. The hills swarmed with prairie chicken and water fowl abounded in the lowlands. Deer and wolves roamed everywhere. A mile and a quarter north of the mound there were sulphur springs, near which was evidence of many deep buffalo wallows.

Settlers first came to this Township in 1854, among them Gideon King and Thomas Kincaid on the north, to the east and south, A. J. Wilhoite, Thomas and Zachariah Arnold, John Doman, J. S. Stagner, and David Wheeler. During the next three years A. H. Conger and James Scott with many others came out on the prairie. The Panic of 1857 slowed further settlement until about ten years later when all the land was sold and homes sprung up as if by magic.

Walter H. Burton, the first school teacher was paid sixty-seven dollars for teaching a term at the Kincaid School north of Grand View in 1856. This school building was furnished by Thomas Kincaid. Districts 1 and 2 were organized in 1856 and the following year a schoolhouse, costing seventy-seven dollars and thirty cents, was built in District No. 1 near the present Grand View School. In the same year the King School was erected on the site of the recent Hopewell School, but the entire township was divided into school districts two miles square in 1858.

Interest in religion was manifested by the Sunday schools and preaching services held in the school buildings; and soon churches of various denominations appeared. In 1861 the Union Methodist Church was built near the southwest corner of Section 5, while the Blue Mound Christian Church was erected in 1868 and the Freewill Baptist Church to the south of Fletcher School. In 1872 Grand View Presbyterian Church was located across from the school by that name. The building was moved to Cooksville in 1884 and remodeled. It is now being used, although the other church buildings have been torn down or sold. Debating societies, spelling bees, writing classes, and political meetings provided a variety of social interests in these communities, and a grange organization also flourished for many years.

This area is comparatively level and drained to the north and northwest by branches of the Mackinaw. Settlers on the north and west sections received

mail from Lexington or Towanda about once each week through neighbors who visited the postoffice at those places. Those living in the southern and eastern sections got their mail from Uncle Johnnie Domian's where it was delivered from Hoar's Post Office on the Old Stage Route.

In the late 1860s William Rockwell established a store across the road and west of the Blue Mound School; later W. L. Sapp bought and enlarged the building. A wagon shop was located near the northeast corner of this intersection, but hopes of establishing a permanent village here vanished when in the early 1880s the store was moved to Ellsworth. The fine brass band which this community supported was reorganized as the Cooksville Band. Boaz, a store and postoffice opened by Steve Downey in 1879, was located at his house on the northeast corner of Section 17. It was destroyed by fire in 1882. The branch line of the Illinois Central Railroad was completed in 1882, bringing with it Cooksville, soon to become a thriving village. Fletcher, consisting of a store, post office, and grain market, also sprung up around this time. The fertile land of Blue Mound Township was soon well drained and much improved by orchards, groves, and good buildings.

#### COOKSVILLE SCHOOL (10) No. 167

From the beginning of Cooksville, the distance and the often impassable roads to the Saint Nicholas School, which the boys and girls attended, caused much controversy. After efforts were made to move the house to Cooksville or to organize a new district, the trustees granted in the spring of 1892 a petition to organize the new District No. 10, consisting of one section, including the village. School was first held over a store and Edward McOmber was the first teacher, however, a two-room schoolhouse was erected in 1893 on the present site. In 1905 Grand View and about one-half of the Saint Nicholas District consolidated with the Cooksville District. Then an unusually long siege of bad roads caused so much dissatisfaction that most of the territory was withdrawn the next year. During the winter of 1922-23 the house burned, but the school continued in the Presbyterian and Christian Churches. The town of Cooksville was named for F. W. Koch, owner of the land on which the village was laid out when the Illinois Central Railroad came through. Cooksville School merged with the Colfax Unit District in 1948. The building is now used as a grade school.

#### COOKSVILLE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 340

From 1897 to 1920 the Village District No. 167 maintained a two-year high school program. Community High School District No. 340 was organized in 1920, and four-year courses have been offered since then. When the

school building was burned in 1923, the local district was unable to rebuild a suitable structure to house both the grades and the high school, so the high school district took over the building program. It has since rented two lower rooms to the Cooksville Grade School District. When the need for a gymnasium arose, the high school board purchased a hall uptown and utilized it for that purpose. Community interest sponsored an excellent school through the years.

#### LINCOLN SCHOOL (9) No. 159

Formerly a part of District No. 4, District No. 9 was organized in 1867. The recent house, named for President Lincoln, was built on the southwest corner of Section 29, and standardized in 1914 with good equipment. Lyceums and Sunday schools were conducted in the building for many years. The district voted to become a part of the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.



LAST DAY OF SCHOOL AT LINCOLN, District No. 159, 1933.  
Lucile Wissmiller, teacher.

#### DIAMOND SCHOOL (8) No. 160

District No. 8 was organized in 1871 of two east sections from Blue Mound District and the two west sections from Lincoln District. A house, erected at that time at the southeast corner of Section 28, served the community until 1885 when it burned. Pupils attended adjoining schools for the remainder of the year. A new building, which was standardized in 1911,

was ready for the opening of school the next fall. A local unit of the Grange was organized here in the early 1870s and flourished for many years. The bright new house of 1871 standing on the prairie suggested the name, *Diamond School*. The district joined the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### BLUE MOUND SCHOOL (7) No. 161

In this district named for the township, N. H. Wilson received \$38 in 1858 for teaching in a residence. In 1860 a house was built at the northwest corner of the N. E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 35 at a cost of \$118.07, while the recent house was erected in the early 1870s. For many years the school with the church, the wagon shop, and the store was an interesting community center. The store was moved to Ellsworth; the "brass band" was reorganized in Cooksville; the church and other buildings were torn down. The school was remodeled but the community was never able to stage a "comeback." District No. 7 was consolidated with the Downs-Ellsworth Unit in 1948.

#### ST. NICHOLAS SCHOOL (6) No. 162

After the district was organized in 1870, the recent house was built by William Hempstreet, who also made the long benches and desks. School opened on October 6th with thirty-five pupils and Lizzie Brigham as the teacher. The site donated by John Nichols accounts for the name of St. Nicholas, by which the school is known. A stipulation in the deed states, "the lot must be kept fenced . . .". The four sections, No. 13, 14, 23, and 24, had been a part of Blue Mound School District and the pupils had previously attended there. Two county superintendents, Willard King of Marshall County and William Brigham of McLean County taught at the "Old St. Nicholas" School.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (5) No. 163

On May 27, 1863 at a special school meeting at Mr. Hemstreet's blacksmith shop, Jesse Lupton, William Hemstreet, and Achelis Durling were elected directors of the new school district. A small building, constructed from raw lumber in the southeast corner of Section 16, served the district until 1871, when a neat frame house was erected across to the southeast. Many literary entertainments, hotly contested elections, and enthusiastic political rallies were held in the schoolhouse, for it was the real center of the community. Later these activities were taken to Cooksville. In 1884 the house was blown from its foundation, but it was soon repaired. The building was torn down and rebuilt in 1920; remodeled and a basement added in 1924. Center School became a part of the Colfax Unit District in 1948.

## FLETCHER SCHOOL (4) No. 164

After the organization of this district in 1861, Mary Augustus taught two six-months terms through the warm weather in a vacant house a half mile south of the recent school. In 1863 Mrs. James Scott taught in her home at a salary of \$20 per month for six months. Clara Barton was the first teacher in the new building, a small frame house with hand-made furniture built in 1864 at the southeast corner of Section 18. In 1877 a larger building was constructed by Oliver Tilbury, using brick for the foundation. In dry weather water had to be carried from a spring to the east.

For many years the school was called *Pleasant View* because the site was high affording a fine view of the new homes springing up on all sides. A church across the road also bore the same name. In 1884 when the Fletcher post office was established, the name was changed to *Fletcher*, for John Fletcher. Nearby schools always enjoyed calling the school *Cocklebur*.



REDEDICATION OF FLETCHER SCHOOL, 1929. Bonnie Sutter, teacher.

Standardized in 1917 and remodeled with basement and indoor toilets in 1929, the school was rededicated on October 20, 1929. Many young people from this district entered the teaching profession. Prominent among them was Walter Dill Scott, the president of Northwestern University from 1920 to 1939, who with his brother, John, attended the homecoming in 1935.

A Sunday school was organized at this school and taught by H. G. Thompson, who later was the superintendent for nine years. The school joined the Colfax Unit District in 1948.

### UNION SCHOOL (3) No. 165

In 1858 when the township was laid out in districts each two miles square, this district was made up of two sections from District No. 2 to the east and two unorganized sections on the west. For that reason it was called *Union School*. In 1859 a small house was erected on the southeast corner of Section 6, but the recent schoolhouse was built in 1867. The building was remodeled, kept in good repair, and was well equipped. Through the years there were spelling bees and literary societies and also large school enrollments. Church services and Sunday schools were held there before the Union Church was built one mile east. This district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.



HOPEWELL, District No. 166. Here the author first taught in 1894. Later the building was modernized and better teachers employed. A similar scene inspired Whittier to write his immortal "School Days"—

"Still sits the schoolhouse by the road,  
A ragged beggar sunning;  
Around it still the sumacs grow,  
And blackberry vines are running."

## HOPEWELL SCHOOL (2) No. 166

An early settler from Kentucky, Gideon King, permitted building on his land and the *King School* was built in 1857 on the southwest corner of Section 3. This roughly constructed school built by Noah Linthicum cost \$173.05 \$130.05 for materials and \$43 for labor. After it was moved away in 1877, the present house with more modern furniture replaced it and was then called *Hopewell* for the first time. Becoming rather dilapidated, it was improved and standardized in 1913. Some years later the front was rebuilt and indoor toilets were installed, which made it one of the best equipped schools in the township. When a young man told John A. Miller, then County Superintendent of Schools, that he was to teach at Hopewell, the response was "I hope it will be well," and possibly someone was thinking along the same line when the school was named. Hopewell School merged with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

## GRAND VIEW SCHOOL (1) No. 168

A frame building, boarded up and down, was erected at the northeast corner of Section 11 in 1857. The cost of the lumber was \$87.30 and Hesekiah Horney was paid \$27.30 for the labor on the house and the furniture, consisting of slab seats with pegs. Later the building was weather boarded. The present house, east of the old one, was built in 1870 on the William Golden land. The Presbyterian Church which was later moved to Cooksville stood across the road to the north. Several persons living near the school had come from Grand View, Ohio, so the church and school were called *Grand View*. The district was consolidated with Cooksville in 1905, but impassable roads and no transportation created sentiment for its restoration as a district. In 1909 it was again made a separate district. A basement and furnace were added in 1938, but the house burned December 3, 1942 and was not rebuilt. It has sometimes been called the *Weber School*. Grand View School joined Colfax Unit district in 1948.

## MARTIN TOWNSHIP 24N-5E

Martin Township located next to the east in the middle tier of townships in the county was named for Dr. Eleazer Martin, an early land owner. The Mackinaw River runs across the north row of sections and three-fourths of that area was originally covered by timber, while the remainder of the township was prairie. There are a few small hills, otherwise, the surface is just gently rolling. Bray's Creek and smaller branches of the Mackinaw drain the southern area.

The rich, black soil was productive but the distance to market was a real handicap to early settlers. For some time a trail road running diagonally

across the township from Saybrook and continuing on to Lexington was the only outlet. In 1880 the Illinois Central Railroad was extended from the northeast to the present site of Colfax. The village of Colfax platted at that time soon grew rapidly—a coal mine was established, business houses were opened, and patrons were attracted from all directions. The town has continued to have many interesting and progressive citizens who have been of real value to that section of the County.

#### COLFAX SCHOOL (1) No. 177

After territory for this district was detached from Wiley District in 1867, a site was selected on the banks of the Mackinaw in the edge of the timber and a neat frame building was erected. It was called *Williams School* for J. R. Williams who lived across the road and north of the school. A strip of land one-half mile wide, detached from the east side of Williams District and added to Anchor District, was restored in 1898 after much controversy.

In 1881 the Williams School was moved to the new village of Colfax three-quarters of a mile northwest on a lot west of the Methodist Church. A four-room house costing \$4000 was built in 1883 on the present site, and in a few years an addition of two rooms was added. With the attainment of a population of 1000 sufficient to require a school board in 1894, the district was reorganized. An addition of two more rooms was made in 1899. After the building burned October 18, 1900, a new twelve-room school, costing \$20,000, was ready in November of 1901. Unfortunately, on January 26, 1903 this building also burned. Even with the heavy debt a new house was erected, using the same site and plans. Also some of the walls and the foundation were utilized in the new building which was ready for occupancy the same year. This structure has served for both the grades and the high school through the years. A gymnasium costing \$13,800 built in 1928 by the Community High School District burned December 6, 1948. Colfax, Cooksville, and Anchor, with about thirty rural schools voted to organize Community District No. 8 on October 9, 1948.

#### COLFAX COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 330

Colfax has had a good four-year high school program for many years. After District No. 330 was organized in 1920, the High School Board rented the upper floors and part of the basement of the Colfax Grade School for classes. The gymnasium was shared with the grade school pupils. The organization of the new unit district with Colfax as the logical center and the burning of the gymnasium lead to a building program. Bonds and a \$700,000 building were approved at an election on December 1, 1950.

## CENTENNIAL SCHOOL (7) No. 169

District No. 3 was laid out in 1858 in the southwest corner of Martin Township. For two years the few children in the district were taught by Mrs. James Heagler in her home. A house, built in 1860 south of the northeast corner of Section 29, was known as the *Nickerson School* for A. R. Nickerson, who had large holdings of land nearby. In the spring of 1876 the four sections recently comprising this district were cut off from No. 3 and a house was built at the northeast corner of Section 31. The lumber was hauled from Arrowsmith and the furniture and blackboards came from A. H. Andrews Company, Chicago. This was the centennial year, so the school was named *Centennial*. The building was always well kept and in recent years it was modernized. The district became a part of Colfax Unit District in 1948.

## RITTER SCHOOL (8) No. 170

Pupils of the two west sections of this district had attended Nickerson School, while the two east sections belonged to Martin Valley or No. 4, which was organized in the early 1860s. A roughly built schoolhouse located in the southeast corner of Section 27 served No. 4 for a number of years. Then the old house was moved to the Ritter farm for a stock shed and a neat frame house was built. When the district was divided and No. 8 organized in 1881, the frame house was moved to the recent location at the northwest corner of Section 34, a site obtained from the J. W. Ritter estate. The building which has always been called *Ritter School* was repaired and partially remodeled. Ritter School joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

## SPRINGER SCHOOL (7) No. 171

When Martin Valley, No. 4, was divided in 1881, District No. 7 was organized from the eastern part. The one-acre site at the northwest corner of Section 36 was donated by Christian W. (Bill) Springer who was very active in circulating the petition for the new district, so the school has always been called *Springer School*. A public library was established here in 1881 which was one of the first in a rural school in McLean County. In 1902 a tornado almost wrecked the schoolhouse. Cloak rooms were added in 1915 and the school was standardized. In 1921 a kitchen was built on the east side and in 1926 the doors were changed to swing outward. The school merged with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

## MCCLURE SCHOOL (6) No. 172

District No. 5 consisting of eight and one-half sections was laid out in 1866. The district was soon organized and a house built on the southeast corner of Section 15 on land owned by Nathan Hawk, for whom the school

was named. In 1882 petitions were circulated which divided District No. 5 into two districts of four sections, each in order to reduce the distance for the pupils. This district comprising the east half of the former district was organized as No. 6 and the house was sold to the district organized to the west. The site at the southwest corner of Section 13 was purchased from Robert McClure for \$30 and a new house costing a little more than \$1000 was ready for use on October 10, 1882. This new school was first named *Tipperary School* No. 6, but later it was changed to *McClure School*. The building was remodeled and made standard in 1923. In 1882 the school had an enrollment of forty-four pupils, only three in 1927, and in 1938 school consisted of seven boys. The district joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### MARTIN CENTER SCHOOL (5) No. 173

Pupils from this area attended school at the Hawk School to the east, but there was much objection to the distance and the condition of the roads leading to the school. James Gillan was active in circulating the petition to divide the district which resulted in the formation of two districts. The west district, No. 5, bought the Hawk schoolhouse which was then moved one mile west to the southwest corner of Section 15. The building was remodeled and the grounds were well kept. For many years debating societies met there. The location made this *Center School* though often called *Gaddis School* for James Gaddis, who lived nearby. In 1938 the enrollment was only three. The school merged with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### BUNN SCHOOL (4) No. 174

Consisting of five sections this district was organized in 1881. The school site at the northwest corner of Section 20 was donated by Isaac Bunn, so it has always been known as the *Bunn School*. Made standard in 1913, the building has since been remodeled by the addition of an entrance on the north. The district joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### FRANKLIN SCHOOL (3) No. 175

The first school in this township, a log house built in 1856, was located about forty rods east of the west line of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 5 on the south side of the road east of the top of the hill. Known as No. 1 and later called *Union School*, the school drew pupils from a distance, even some from Blue Mound Township who paid tuition. The school had been an interesting community center. In the late 1860s a neat frame house was erected one quarter mile south of the recent site. After the hard road was opened in 1928, the house was moved to its last location at the northwest corner of Section 8. Repaired and with a new basement, this was the first school in the County to have Venetian blinds and fluorescent lighting. The

school was named for Benjamin Franklin. This district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### WILEY SCHOOL (2) No. 176

In 1858 a cheap frame house was built at the north edge of the woods, almost a mile north and a little east of the recent site. The local Christian Church was organized there in 1859. The roads and the Mackinaw River were a problem in 1867, so the district was divided leaving less than three sections for this district. The site at the southwest corner of Section 3 was obtained from Lytle Wiley but no house was built. Dissolved in 1869 the district was restored the next year for sentiment demanded a school there. The recent house erected then served the district through the years. It was kept in excellent repair, but the enrollment in 1938 was just two pupils. Always called *Wiley School*, the school joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### ANCHOR TOWNSHIP 24N-6E

Detached from Cropsey Township and organized as Anchor in 1877, this township is the farthest east in the middle tier of townships. The Mackinaw River in its early stages and with several branches drains the entire area. With the exception of a small portion in the southeastern part, the surface is rather level inclining slightly from the south. The soil is mostly a deep black loam. A small grove in Section 5 was the only timber area in Anchor Township. The first settler, W. T. Stackpole, who came in 1855, purchased more than two thousand acres and built a large residence. He was one of the first to successfully break the prairie sod with horses.

A trail road from Saybrook to Lexington provided the first outlet for marketing grain. Later the county road crossing from Saybrook north to Fairbury was opened with an iron bridge across the Mackinaw. To the south of the bridge on the west side of the road was a post office called Garda, and another post office, known as Dart, was situated about four miles to the south. Mail was brought by carrier on horseback twice each week. The village of Anchor was established in 1880 when the Illinois Central branch of the railroad came through. Among the township's many sturdy citizens were Jacob Martens, who served some time in the General Assembly, and D. B. Stewart, who had an important part in the civic development of the township.

#### ANCHOR SCHOOL (2, 403) No. 187

In 1868 a sturdy frame house was built on the north side of the Mackinaw River near the road on the east side of Section 6. After the village was laid out in 1879, this school was moved to the southeast corner of West and Third streets onto a triangular lot. Having been the *Stewart Bunch*

*School*, it was now called *Little Red School*. The rapidly growing village soon required two teachers. A neat brick building was erected in 1896 at a cost of \$5000 and a year of high school work was offered for the first time in 1907. In 1916 a third teacher was hired and a two-year high school course was begun.



BIRD HOUSE CONTEST AT ANCHOR GRADE SCHOOL, Lucy Spires, principal.

In 1921 Districts No. 187 and No. 229 voted to organize a community consolidated district but residents of former District No. 229 soon became dissatisfied on account of the distance and lack of transportation. A vote on July 7, 1924 to detach No. 229 failed of the necessary three-fourths majority. However, another vote in 1931 succeeded in putting No. 229 back as a rural school. In 1933 District No. 187 voted out the consolidation. Through the years the residents of Anchor have shown much interest in the elementary school, giving it good management and equipment. The modern gymnasium built by the high school district was also helpful to the elementary school. Seven rural schools consolidated with Anchor in 1947 and in 1948 this entire township was included in the Community District No. 8.

#### ANCHOR COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 310

Since the Anchor Community High School No. 310 was organized in 1920, a four-year high school program has been offered. In 1923 the high school district built an addition to the Anchor Grade School at a cost of

\$30,000. It included study hall, classrooms, and an office as well as other modern improvements. The high school enrollment has been small although they have done excellent work.

#### SHERWOOD SCHOOL (6) No. 178

District No. 6 was organized in 1870. The recent house was built in 1872 at the northwest corner of Section 32. In 1873 George R. Buck who lived near organized the congregation which later built the Bethel Methodist Church one mile to the east. Repaired at times and made standard, the schoolhouse underwent rather extensive repairs in 1919. Named for Robert Sherwood who owned the west half of the district, the school became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### ROCKFORD SCHOOL (4) No. 179

In 1866 the south half of the township consisting of eighteen sections was organized as District No. 3. A schoolhouse built on the east side of Section 21 and called *Jones School* housed the first Sunday school begun in the township. When the district was cut up into four districts, Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, in 1870, this district, No. 4, consisted of six sections. The recent site, about eighty rods north of the southeast corner of Section 28 and a mile south of the Jones School, was donated by Abe Jones. The United Brethren held services there for sometime. Called *Rockford* from the name of an insurance company on a plate above the door, a new cement block building was erected in 1913 and about ten years later the porch was added. The district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### Mt. ZION SCHOOL (1) No. 180

After District No. 1 was divided in 1877, the old Worley School one mile west was abandoned. A half acre site at the northwest corner of Section 13 was selected for what remained of No. 1. There a small frame house was built which served the large enrollment of the district until 1895, when another half acre was added to the south side and the recent house was erected. This house, remodeled and well maintained through the years, was sometimes called *Kerber School* for Mat Kerber, a prominent farmer and director who supervised the building of the new house. The name, *Mt. Zion School*, appears well established although its origin is unknown. There was an excellent parents' club at this school. The district joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### FAIRVIEW SCHOOL (5) No. 181

After the organization of the district in 1870, a small frame building was erected at the northeast corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 26. It was replaced in 1875 by the recent larger and more beautiful school. The Lutheran Congregation was organized here, using the house for many years before a church

was built one mile north and one mile west. An interesting community center, the school's location on the broad level prairie made the name, Fairview, very appropriate. John Calvin Hanna, the first High School Inspector in the State Superintendent's Office, taught his first school here in 1876. The district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.



FAIRVIEW SCHOOL, District No. 181, 1937. Louise T. Simpson, teacher.

#### KINGSTON SCHOOL (9) No. 182

The west four and one-half sections were cut off from District No. 1 in 1877 for this new district. The recent small frame schoolhouse was built on the south side of Section 9 was obtained from Milton Kingston. While Cropsey and Anchor Townships were together, the voting center was the Worley School, a mile and a quarter east of this school. Kingston later became the voting center for Anchor Township. The building has been but slightly remodeled through the years, although an excellent school has been conducted there with very good community cooperation. The district consolidated with Anchor in 1947 and joined District Unit No. 8 in 1948.

#### SABIN SCHOOL (3) No. 183

The district was organized in 1870 from District No. 3 which had been divided into four districts. A house of rough lumber was built on the northwest corner of Section 20 and furnished with crude benches and a table.

Sold for \$26.03, this house was moved away by the use of six yoke of oxen. In 1878 a new house was built on the southeast corner of Section 18 at a cost of \$700.80 for the house and \$20 for the lot. The land for the school was obtained from Dr. Daniel Sabin, and consequently, it was called *Sabin School*. A flood on July 9, 1885 floated the house north to lodge against the willows at the junction of the streams. Joseph Perry put up a new foundation and moved it back, charging \$100 plus \$14.75 for brick and other repair materials. Remodeled and made standard in 1927, the schoolhouse was sometimes called *Frog Alley School* because of its low terrain. At the first homecoming on July 29, 1934 two-hundred fifty were present. The school joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### MILLER SCHOOL (7) No. 188

This district organized in 1868 erected a temporary building on the west side of the road almost a mile to the north of the recent school. In 1872 the recent site was selected and a small house was built at the northeast corner of Section 2. With the addition of an entrance on the north, it has served the district through the years. The school was named for Charlie Miller who lived across the road to the east. The district consolidated with Cropsey in 1947, which later joined Fairbury.

#### WHITE OAK TOWNSHIP 25N-1E

White Oak Township was named for the beautiful and large tract of timber which follows the Mackinaw River, extending through the northwest part of the township. The "old trail," later known as the state road, threaded across the prairie toward the high ground in the northwest. The remainder of the Township is level to moderately rolling. The site of Oak Grove and the high elevation of Indian Point could almost be called scenic. The first settler, Smith Denman, arrived in 1829 and other settlers soon followed.

Early inhabited parts of the Township, including the timbered areas, were served by three log schools supported mainly by subscription. Denman School was located near the trail; Middle School was built on a side trail about one mile and a half southwest in Section 21; and the other school was farther west. White Oak is the smallest township in McLean County.

#### CARLOCK SCHOOL (8, 12) No. 189

Prairie District was organized in 1863, and consisted of five sections—two in White Oak Township and three in Dry Grove Township. Muddy roads and slow methods of traveling in those days made the distance to school a hardship for some of the pupils. Therefore, the district was divided in 1869, with two sections in White Oak Township becoming Chapel District No. 15. A jog in the district lines made it possible to include approximately eighty

acres in Danvers Township. It was in this area that the school was erected. The remaining three sections were known as Bunker Hill, District No. 12, and its school was built in the northwest corner of Section 4 in Dry Grove Township about one and one-half miles from the present site of Carlock.

The town of Carlock is a good example of the interesting part railroads have played in fixing the location of communities. At one time Oak Grove was a prosperous little village which stood on a hill in White Oak Township. When the Nickel Plate Railroad, then known as Lake Erie and Western Railroad, was extended west from Bloomington in 1887, it was built southwest of Oak Grove to avoid the hill. Soon Oak Grove business men began to move to the railroad and the beautiful little village began to decline, while Carlock, laid out by John F. Carlock in 1887, began to grow.



BIRD HOUSE CONTEST at Carlock Grade School, 1914, Edmund Augspurger, principal.

The increasing population created a demand for a school closer to Carlock than either Chapel or Bunker Hill, where the children were then attending. So for a time the town hall was rented, and served as a subscription school for those who could afford to attend. In 1893 the present Carlock District was organized and both Chapel and Bunker Hill Schools were soon abandoned. A two-story brick building erected in Carlock in 1894 used only one of its rooms until 1899 when two teachers were employed. To meet the fast growing demands for higher education, one year of high school work

was added to the curriculum in 1906 and the faculty was increased to three teachers. In 1939 with the help of the Public Works Administration, the present brick building was constructed at a cost of nearly \$20,000.

#### CARLOCK TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL NO. 366

The Carlock Township High School was organized under the 1911 Township High School Act. This law, nicknamed the "Humming Bird Act", provided that the inhabitants of any contiguous and compact territory, either in the same or different townships, upon a petition signed by at least fifty legal voters and an affirmative vote in such territory might establish a township high school. A petition was filed with the County Superintendent and he called an election on March 26, 1914, which resulted in one hundred and ninety-three votes for and fifty-four against the proposition to establish the district. In 1916 this High School Act was declared unconstitutional but in the next year the Fiftieth General Assembly validated all districts formed under the Act. The law provided for a board of education of seven members with the president elected each year. The personnel of the first Board consisted of: M. P. Lantz, president; D. A. Augstin, secretary; J. K. Esh, Dr. McDonald, Ali G. Stahly, Mary B. Hamilton, and Dan Maurer, members.

It is interesting to note that the Legislature has since passed community high school acts. The present Act has been upheld in the Courts. As far as legal terms are concerned, Carlock was a township high school, however, its scope and purposes are those intended in any of the other high schools organized under the more recent Act.

Edmund Augspurger was placed in charge of the new high school and the classes met in the telephone building. The Board purchased the present site for \$1000 and the old Christian Church for \$600. Remodeling and equipment brought total expense to \$6000. The second teacher was hired in 1916, the faculty was increased to three in 1918, and later other teachers were added.

An excellent four-year high school was maintained through the years. The gymnasium was built in 1926 for \$6000 and in 1936 several of the rooms were enlarged. In the summer of 1941 a vote to build a new school was defeated by a vote of one hundred fifty-nine to one hundred sixty-nine. The proposition was again submitted in October, but it was lost by one vote. All schools of this Township joined the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### CROWN POINT SCHOOL (7) NO. 190

A log school, built in 1856 across the road and east of the recent site at the northeast corner of Section 33, served the community until the early 1870s when the frame house was erected. In 1929 a basement and furnace

were added. Called Swann and Hamilton for nearby residents, the school has generally been known as *Crown Point*. Since it was located north of Bunker Hill School, someone made the historic connection and named the school.

This was the first prairie school in the Township. Enrollment was rather large in early times, especially while the pupils of Oak Grove attended there and it had its share of community interest and community programs. The first homecoming, a big event, was held in June, 1934 and other annual gatherings of that nature have been held since then. The school consolidated with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### DENMAN SCHOOL (4) No. 191

Across the trail west of the cemetery the settlers built in 1840 a log house which was used as a subscription school for several years. The newly organized Methodist group also held meetings there. Ten years later, in 1850, a frame schoolhouse was erected on the south side just east of the recent site. This building faced the east and was located near the spring. In 1867 the recent building was constructed on the county line and maintained in fair condition. The school was named for Smith Denman, the first settler in the township, who helped found the church and the cemetery. The school was absorbed by the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### MAPLE GROVE SCHOOL (6, 11) No. 192

The first school in this district was held during the winter of 1859-60 in a room at the Christian Ropp home. In 1860 a rough frame building was erected across from the recent site and equipped with home-made benches and desks but without blackboards. This building was moved in 1867, one mile east to the northeast corner of Section 36, west of the Manassah Troyer home, and was then known as *Troyer School*. Territory to the east was organized as Kaufman School in 1875 and a new school was built in this district at the southwest corner of Section 25. The many maple trees set out at that time suggested the name, *Maple Grove School*. The school was well equipped. A furnace was put in the basement and for a while natural gas was used as fuel. The district merged with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### WHITE OAK SCHOOL (5) No. 193

White Oak schoolhouse was built in the early 1860s at the northwest corner of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 24. Named for Jessie Chism whose home was west of the school, it was known as *Chism School* until 1913 when the name was changed to *White Oak*. The school served as both a place of learning and a community center. The building was remodeled to meet state requirements as needs arose, so that it was well equipped, though its enrollment was very small. The school was absorbed by the Normal Unit in 1948.

*HUDSON TOWNSHIP 25N-2E*

Hudson is the second township north of Bloomington Township. Skirted on the northern border by the Mackinaw River with its attendant timber, the Six Mile Creek meanders across the Township toward the northwest, Hickory Creek, on the other hand, flows toward the northeast to join Money Creek as it crosses the Township from the southeast. Some of the wooded areas along the streams are plenty rough while the prairie sections are but slightly rolling with rich black soil.

The first permanent settlement was made by Jesse Havens in 1829 at the grove which bears his name on Six Mile Creek. Hinthorns were the first to settle in the northeast section on Money Creek. The Bloomington-Ottawa Trail through this area meant occasional mail and needed supplies, and the completion of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1854 provided the local market which was greatly needed. The Hudson Colony was established in 1836 by settlers who came from Hudson, New York. A share in the Colony cost \$235 and entitled the owner to four lots in the newly platted village, twenty acres of timber, and one hundred and sixty acres of prairie land. The promoters built two schoolhouses for the colonists—one west of the cemetery and the other on the Cox farm in Section 11.

Another village was platted about two miles north of Hudson by H. D. Cook, father of John W. Cook, at one time president of Illinois State Normal University. The town was called Oneida for Mr. Cook's home in New York. The Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad was expected to come through the town site but the railroad was built some distance to the north and the town project was abandoned. Hudson has been the home of several men of national reputation, including Elbert Hubbard, Melville Stone, and Buffalo Jones. Several prominent educators began their educations in local schools.

*HUDSON SCHOOL (4) No. 197*

As agreed by the promoters of the Hudson Colony a one-room school building was erected in 1838 on the west side of the east cemetery, where for almost forty years school was conducted. Religious and political groups also met there. About 1875 this original building was replaced by a two-story house located in the southwest corner of what is now the cemetery. Two teachers were then employed, but in 1903 the present site was selected and a four-room brick veneer building was erected. The old house was sold to J. F. Keller, moved to the northwest corner of Block 18, and remodeled into a very good residence. The new school was destroyed by fire in 1911 but it was rebuilt without delay. A third teacher was added in 1907 in order to offer two years of high school work. In 1920 three teachers were employed

in the grades. A three-year high school course was planned in 1934, with a faculty of three, but the high school was discontinued in 1936. Most of Hudson Township was added to the Normal Community High School District in 1938. In 1948 the grade school joined the Normal Unit District.



JOHNNIE RAMSEYER AND HIS 4-H CLUB PIG, COLUMBIÀ, 1918. John A. is now Director of Secondary Education at Ohio State University.

#### KAUFMAN SCHOOL (8) No. 194

In 1875 District No. 8, consisting of one and one-half sections, that had previously been a part of District No. 6 in White Oak Township, was organized but the new district did not maintain school for one year. In 1878 two more sections were added and the recent house was built at the northeast corner of Section 31. Kept in good repair, the building was improved in recent years by an addition on the north side for indoor toilets. The school has always been known as *Kaufman School*, because the building site was purchased from Christian Kaufman. Two sons of M. L. Ramseyer, a director of many years service, have been quite successful in their chosen fields of effort. Roy is a Bloomington attorney; and Lloyd is the president of Bluffton College. This district became a part of the Normal Unit District in 1948.

#### HERRING SCHOOL (7) No. 195

This small district of two and one-half sections was cut off from Hudson and Skinner Districts in 1875, because the distance to either school was con-

sidered too far over the unimproved roads of that time. A small house was built at the northeast corner of Section 34 and called *Herring School* for S. Herring who lived to the east of the school. It has been kept in good repair until recent years. In 1937 the school was closed, for there was only one pupil to attend. This school consolidated with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### **SKINNER SCHOOL (5) No. 196**

Territory in this district was detached from Hudson District in 1863. After much delay the present site was obtained from Mark Skinner, thus it has always been known as the *Skinner School*. S. Y. Gillan, later a prominent lecturer and publisher, taught here in 1871. A rather long building, erected at the northeast corner of Section 26 in 1865, has served the community through the years. The house was later remodeled with an addition for toilets and library. More than thirty pupils from this district have become teachers. The school merged with the Normal Unit in 1948.

#### **GROVE SCHOOL (1) No. 198**

The first school in Hudson Township was held in the west room of Jesse Haven's house with Dr. Oliver March as teacher. For some time after that a subscription school was conducted at the Methodist Church located in the old cemetery. In the early 1840s a small frame house was built on the east side of the road west of the cemetery. A new building costing \$800, was erected on the west side of the road in the summer of 1856. At that time the district was very large but other districts were being organized and in 1862 this district still had eight and three-quarter sections. In 1878 Districts No. 8 and 9 were organized from the territory of No. 1, leaving but two and three-quarter sections, so District No. 198 united with Hudson District No. 197 in 1911. Grove schoolhouse was used as a dwelling, oil station, and store and was moved farther back from the road in 1931.

#### **HOLDER SCHOOL (9) No. 199**

After much complaint about the distance to the school and impassable roads from the residents of the west side of District No. 1, a house was built at the northwest corner of Section 29 for their convenience. For a time two schools were conducted in the district. In 1878 the district was divided, each half district taking a schoolhouse. The new district was Kaufman, and the building on the C. W. Holder land is the recent *Holder School*. Though enrollment was small most of the time, the house was improved and repaired to meet the state requirements when it became necessary. The school merged with the Normal Unit District in 1948.

## ONEIDA SCHOOL (3) No. 200

The Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad was expected to cross the Illinois Central Railroad at the location of the platting of the town of Oneida. H. D. Cook, father of John Cook president of Illinois State Normal University from 1890-1899, came from Oneida County, New York and was interested in promoting the new town. A log schoolhouse was built in the early 1850s and later a frame house was erected northeast of town, which served the community for sometime. Since most of the children lived west of the railroad, it was decided to find a new site more nearly the center of the district. In 1867 the recent location at the west center of Section 9 was selected and the house was completed in 1868. The school then had home-made seats and desks with a rostrum for the teacher at the west end and a door at each side. In 1904 a hall and coatrooms were added and the house was raised and remodeled in 1916 to comply with the state requirements. An excellent school was maintained.

For many years the Dunkards used the schoolhouse for church services but in 1875 they built their own church which was later moved to Hudson. The members of the Christian Church also met at Oneida School, but later built in Hudson.

District No. 200 joined the Normal Unit District in 1948.

## UNION SCHOOL (2) No. 201

In the early 1840s a small frame house was erected one-half mile east of the recent site by the stockholders of the Hudson Colony. After a few years more room was needed and Oneida Station was being abandoned, so the store building with its sign, *Cash and Produce*, was moved to this site and remodeled in 1862. It served for school purposes until 1869. The residents of the east side of this district seceded in 1867, feeling that they would be happier with their own district. The recent site at the northeast corner of Section 15 was selected because of its nearness to the center of the district. The new house was completed in 1870 and the old one was sold to Lewis Sailor for \$30.25 and was used as a church for a time. The lot was bought by Mr. Stotler for \$10. For many years Union was one of the largest and best supported schools in the Township, because the district showed a real interest in education. Many of the young people became teachers or entered other professions. The house was modernized and remodeled in 1918, but on February 26, 1920 the schoolhouse burned. The new building was completed for the beginning of school in the fall at a cost of \$8500. The Union School consolidated with Normal Unit District in 1948. Grades one to six are now taught there.

## PLEASANT GROVE SCHOOL (6) No. 202

After much controversy the three sections comprising this district were detached from Union District in 1867. Trouble had arisen between the timber and prairie groups. Those living in the woods were accused of being "Copper Heads" or even "horse thieves". A house was built on the recent site at the center of Section 12 and from the reputation of the community, it was soon called "Hell's Bend". Time has seen all animosity vanish, yet the name lingered on. The recent small house bearing the sign, *Pleasant Grove School, September, 1892*, was erected in front of the dilapidated old house. The interesting little school was well equipped. The old house was sold in 1894 for \$15 to Daniel Ogden. This district, like many of the early communities, had its subscription schools held in a home or vacant building. The school merged with the Normal Unit in 1948.

## MONEY CREEK TOWNSHIP 25N-3E

This Township lies just north of the center township of the County. In the northeastern part there is extensive timber along the Mackinaw River and also a large wooded area in the western sections along Money Creek. In the southwest corner and in the center of the Township extending to the southeast section, there is some very fine prairie land. Settlers had located in Big Grove or Money Creek Timber as early as 1826. Clarksville was platted in 1836. The town had a church, a log school, a large store, a saw mill, and several residences but it soon declined after the railroad was constructed through Lexington.

The first log school in the Township was built in 1837 on the north bank of Money Creek in the southeastern part of Section 29. An early saw mill was owned by Jacob Spauer and located on the creek east of the United Brethren Church. In more recent times, H. Mathias operated a saw and grist mill farther down stream near the western border of the Township. The first United Brethren Church in Illinois was organized in 1830 and located in Money Creek Township where a stone marker was recently placed. The Bloomington-Chicago Trail came through from the southwest just east of the Bishop Cemetery. Distance to markets and mail service were greatly improved when nearby Towanda was established. About 1890 a postoffice, called Fifer located just south of the West Mackinaw Bridge, began serving the northern part of the Township and surrounding areas. The east side of Lake Bloomington which was completed in 1930 is situated in this Township. Of the many prominent citizens from Money Creek Township, we should mention Joseph Bartholomew, Judge Thomas Tipton, the Franklins, Hansons, and the Mahans.

**BISHOP SCHOOL (3) No. 203**

The first school in this district, also the first in Money Creek Township, was taught by W. P. Bishop in 1836-37 in one room of a double log cabin, the home of Isaac Messer and his family. It was located west of the creek and northeast of the recent site. A new log school was then built on the north side of Money Creek in the southeastern part of Section 29. This building was eighteen feet square, had four glass windows, a plank floor, and was heated by a wood stove.

After 1855 a neat frame house was built in Bishop's field near the trail southeast of the recent schoolhouse which was erected in 1868 on the southwest corner of Section 29. Bishop School has been kept in good repair, remodeled, and well equipped to meet the requirements of later years. It was named for the pioneer family of Bishops, long associated with this neighborhood. Austin White was the first teacher in the log schoolhouse, followed by J. Dow, D. Blood, Mr. Barton, W. F. Bishop, William Moore, J. McAfferty, Margaret Ogden, Wallace Coman, Mrs. Merryman, and W. F. Johnson. Circuit Judge Thomas F. Tipton attended this school as a boy. This district became a part of the Normal Unit in 1948.

**FROG ALLEY SCHOOL (4) No. 204**

In the early 1860s a small frame building was built on the recent site east of the railroad at the south side of Section 27. This rather low area was often referred to as being in a frog pond, but today this low prairie land, now drained, provides the richest farming land in Illinois. However, the name, *Frog Alley*, established in the early days continues to linger. Through the years the school enrollments have been large and interesting. Constructed in the 1890s, the last school building was remodeled and kept up to date fairly well. The district was divided between Normal and Lexington Units in 1948.

**HEFNER SCHOOL (5) No. 205**

In the 1850s a neat frame schoolhouse was erected on the recent site and served the community until 1908 when a new building was constructed. The new school with a basement was the first one-room house in the County in which the necessary light came in on the children's left. At the time of its construction, Hefner was the finest frame school building in the County.

It is located eighty rods from the west side of Section 14 on the south side of the early state road, known as the Bloomington-Chicago Trail. This section of the trail is the longest remaining stretch in use in the County today. Hefner, like some other districts in this Township, consisted of about six sections and has had large enrollments through the years. The school was

located on the land of Peter Hefner, an early pioneer, who came here in 1830, and it has always been called *Hefner School*. About one and one-half miles east of the schoolhouse on the same side of the trail, the Bartholomew block-house was located during the Black Hawk War of 1832. This district consolidated with the Lexington School in 1947 and with the Lexington Unit District in 1948.



HEFNER SCHOOL, 1932. Josephine Wisner, teacher.

#### TRIMMER SCHOOL (2) No. 206

In the early days children from this district attended a subscription school conducted by Delilah Maple in her home west of the Mathias mill. A neat frame schoolhouse was built in 1856 on the west side of the trail almost a mile north of the recent site. Heavy benches were placed along the wall and an enormous desk was added for the teacher. This building was sold in 1868 and a new house was erected on the same side of the trail but farther south. This school was destroyed by fire in 1883.

The road was moved to the section lines, which explains the final location of the new school north of the center of Section 20. A new house was ready for occupancy in 1884 and completely remodeled in 1914. Improvements since included a library, a kitchen, a basement, indoor toilets, a stoker, and indirect lighting, as evidence of community interest in its school.

In 1908 Maud Armstrong began teaching there and gave eight years

of outstanding service. During the period of her teaching many of the improvements were made and the influence of her work has endured through the years. The directors have always tried to secure excellent teachers and have given them good support. Trimmer School received the State Superior Rating in 1940. The three school buildings of the district were all on the land of Jesse Trimmer who donated the sites, hence it has always been known as *Trimmer School*. The school was divided between the Lexington and Normal Unit Districts in 1948. The schoolhouse was sold in 1949 to the Township, to be used as a Town Hall and community center.



WILCOX SCHOOL, District No. 207, 1925. County Superintendent of Schools Nettie B. Dement and Mr. Dement, visiting. Blanche Messer, teacher.

#### WILCOX SCHOOL (8) No. 207

A log schoolhouse was built on a hill in the early 1850s one-eighth mile east and one-quarter mile south of the recent location on the edge of what was then a timber area. The school served the community until after the close of the Civil War when the present building was erected. The new site was donated jointly by William Wilcox and Jonathan Ogden, each giving one-half. In 1925 the building was becoming almost unfit for school use but because building costs were high, it was decided to completely remodel

the old school, which was done efficiently. Plans for an addition and further remodeling were worked out in 1940 but lack of funds prevented the completion of the work. The school was named for William Wilcox, an early settler and the father-in-law of A. A. Stewart, who was a school director for more than fifty years. This has been one of the interesting schools of the Township. They joined the Lexington Unit District.

#### OLIVE BRANCH SCHOOL (6) No. 208

In early Clarksville, a double log cabin was built for church purposes, and a subscription school was conducted in one room for several years. When our public school system began to function in 1855, Buck Creek District erected a frame building to the north on the prairie. The area which was made a part of this district included those residing on timber lots in this section. Friction between residents of the timber and those of the prairie land caused pupils to quarrel. Resulting fights only made matters worse. Finally in 1877 this district was organized by taking territory from Buck Creek and Franklin Districts. The recent house was then erected northwest of Clarksville. James Dennis, a champion speller and a bright young man, suggested the name, *Olive Branch*, because he felt that they could now live in peace as far as the prairie boys and girls were concerned. (James, son of William Dennis, was later an editor in Wichita, Kansas.)

Olive Branch community showed much interest in this district. The house was remodeled, well equipped, and kept up to date. A Superior Rating was given the school in 1938. The district consolidated with Lexington in 1947 and joined Lexington Unit District in 1948.

#### FRANKLIN SCHOOL (1) No. 209

A small frame schoolhouse was erected on the Noah Franklin farm in 1856. At the close of the Civil War, this building was moved about one-quarter mile west, where school was conducted until the territory to the west was detached for Olive Branch District in 1877. Again the building was moved, this time to the recent site on the Fort Clark road, where it was reconditioned for school. Closed in 1914 because of small enrollments, pupils were then transferred to Lexington. This was the first school in McLean County to close under that section of the law.

The school was repaired, made standard, reopened, and operated until 1934. Reopened again in 1938 for three years, it closed again in 1941. A fair example of a schoolhouse built in the early days of the County, it has always been located on Franklin land. The district merged with Lexington in 1947 and became a part of the Lexington Unit in 1948.

**LEXINGTON TOWNSHIP 25N-4E**

Lexington Township is northeast of the center township in the County. Crossed by the Mackinaw River which is accompanied by a large timbered area, some of which is quite rough, the surface of most of the adjoining prairie is moderately rolling, providing excellent farm land. Beautiful timber in this area attracted settlers as early as 1828. Many Indians were living in the vicinity—a Kickapoo village was located at Pleasant Hill; a Delaware village was established on the north side of the Mackinaw just east of Mt. Gilead School. Indians of McLean County made no trouble during the Black Hawk War, but as a precaution the Patton cabin at Pleasant Hill, which is still standing, was fortified. The Henlines built a fort to the east in Lauderdale and a blockhouse was erected in Money Creek Township. The first house in the village of Lexington was a double log cabin built by Jacob Spawr in 1836 to be used as a tavern and postoffice. It was a good location for business because it was on the Bloomington-Chicago trail, at the junction with the Fort Clark road. Lexington was platted that year but its growth was very slow. Pleasant Hill was then a thriving town which ceased to expand after the railroad came through Lexington in 1854. Lexington became a trading center for a large area of the County, for its business men and enterprising citizens were not to be outdone by those in other sections of the County. They always took time out for big Fourth of July celebrations and for political rallies.

**LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (5) No. 215**

A crude log schoolhouse in the woods south of town was the only place for school and church services in the community for several years. After the Chicago and Alton Railroad came through in 1854 the town began to grow rapidly and many frame houses were erected. A. J. Flesher conducted a school in a building near the present park for some time, while other teachers rented rooms for schools in the village. In 1858 A. J. Anderson started a high school in a hall in the Kent Building. These schools had all been managed on the subscription plan.

Soon after the district was organized in 1856, all schools were maintained by public taxation. Rooms were rented until the beautiful two-story brick school building was erected southeast of the park in 1865 at a cost of \$10,000. It was still standing in 1945. The principal, John A. Sterling, introduced the first course of study in the high school in 1880. A new eight-room school, costing \$20,750, was built on the present site in 1896. On December 12, 1913 the high school building on the east half of the block was dedicated. In 1914 a fire destroyed the building on the west half of the block occupied by the



BIRD HOUSE CONTEST, Lexington Grade School, 1918.

elementary school. It was replaced by the present school. People of Lexington have always shown a wonderful interest in their schools.

#### LEXINGTON COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL NO. 320

Organized on January 15, 1920, the first Board of Education was W. P. Scott, President; A. P. Schantz, Secretary; Fred Thum, E. C. Mahan, H. C. Ellis, members. The local high school building, erected in 1913 at a cost of \$30,000, was leased to the new District No. 320 until 1930 when they purchased it. The athletic field was built in 1935 by the two Boards jointly. In 1942 an excellent gymnasium and rooms for modern vocational subjects were added at a cost of around \$60,000. The Lexington Community Unit District No. 7 was organized June 12, 1948.

#### POPEJOY SCHOOL (10) NO. 210

A neat frame building was erected in 1867 at the southwest corner of Section 19 in Lexington Township on a site donated by John Popcjoy, an early settler, hence its name. This building, with several remodelings, served the community until January 25, 1937 when it was destroyed by fire. The recent modern building was erected the same year. Located in a large district, Popejoy has been an interesting school through the years. The district consolidated with the Lexington Unit in 1948.

**HORNEY SCHOOL (7) No. 211**

Sugar Creek School, built in the 1840s, was located near the bend of the creek one half mile north and east of the recent site. The children of this district attended there until 1866 when the school was built near the south side of Section 29 on land of Hesekiah (Ki) Horney, an early settler. The school was a center for literary entertainments, spelling bees, and similar activities for many years. In 1892 a new house was built by Riley Holmes and the old building was sold to Dick Finley. Remodeled several times, usually by an addition to the length, it was made standard in 1919. The school merged with the Lexington Unit in 1948.

**ADAMS SCHOOL (3) No. 212**

A small rather crude frame house was built in the 1860's north of the creek, a quarter mile south and some west of the recent site. When a road was opened from the west in 1877, the late building was erected on the north side of Section 34. Matthew Adams, who came from Kentucky in 1834, gave the land for the original site. With but few pupils, the school was closed in 1941. The district joined the Lexington Unit in 1948.

**Mt. GILEAD SCHOOL (2) No. 213**

In the early 1860s a house was built on the west side of the road about one-quarter mile north and a quarter mile east of the recent site. Cheaply made, the building was soon torn down and a new schoolhouse was built in 1868 on the southeast corner of Section 26. After three floors had worn out in this building, it was replaced in 1918 with a new structure. James S. Pearson, an early teacher from Mt. Gilead, Ohio, named the school *Mt. Gilead*, by which it has always been known. A village of Delaware Indians was located north of the bend in the Mackinaw River to the southeast and their cornfields were just south of the school. The school became a part of the Lexington District Unit in 1948.

**PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL (4) No. 214**

In the autumn of 1830 men of the Patton settlement had prepared the logs for a schoolhouse but were waiting for a "sledding snow" to move them to the site, when the "deep snow" came and delayed the building for that year. With the Black Hawk War intervening, the school was not completed until late in 1832 to become the first school in Lexington Township. The house was built on a hill south of the road and northwest of the cemetery. The log school had puncheon floor, clapboard roof, a door of puncheon hung on wooden hinges and swung inward, and a heavy wooden bar was used to barricade the door from the inside. Pegged benches were of split basswood made smooth with a broad ax. There were no desks but there were benches

along the wall for those who did writing. A huge fireplace took up most of one end of the room. A sawed floor, better windows, and benches with desks were added later but this building was discarded in 1843.



PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL, District No. 214 — a hike to the gravel pit for fossils, 1933. Freida M. Morrison, teacher.

A frame schoolhouse was then moved from Lexington which was provided with walnut seats and desks. It was heated with a large wood stove, and made rather comfortable for the rapidly increasing school enrollment. A frame two-story school was erected in 1857 at the rear of the recent school lot at the southeast corner of the village of Pleasant Hill and called the "Academy." A principal and three assistants served the community for a time, after which it became a two-teacher school. The present schoolhouse was completed in 1890 and has been remodeled, made modern, and well-equipped. The former school building was torn down. Through the years, Pleasant Hill was one of the largest one-teacher schools in the County and its community was cooperative in the development of a social center of value and pleasure to the entire district. Pleasant Hill consolidated with the Lexington District in 1948.

#### CROSS ROADS SCHOOL (5) No. 216

In the early 1860s a building was erected on the east side of the road about forty rods south of the recent school on the land of W. D. Johnson,

hence it was known as the *Johnson School*. One-half acre in the northeast corner of Section 9 was purchased in 1872 from Sarah Strayer for \$50 and the schoolhouse was then moved to this site where it served well for the next fifty-six years. The new modern brick veneer building was built in 1928 at the location suggesting the name it has borne these many years, *Cross Roads*. The school merged with the Lexington Unit in 1948.

#### CRUMBAKER SCHOOL (9) No. 217

Pupils residing in this district had attended subscription schools and schools in other districts until 1867 when a small frame building was erected on the recent site at the center of the east side of Section 14. This house was replaced by a new building in 1890 which has since been remodeled and made into a modern school, even though the enrollment was small. An interesting school with all the entertainment and events characteristic of early days, it has been called *Crumbaker* for William A. Crumbaker who lived across the road to the east. The district consolidated with the Lexington Unit in 1948.

#### PRairie HALL SCHOOL (1) No. 218

The first house was built on the open prairie one half mile north of the southwest corner of Section 1 in 1855 by James and William Lindsay. James Lindsay often plowed furrows around the schoolhouse to keep prairie fires away from it. The building was used for Sunday school as well as political and other meetings, thus it was early styled *Prairie Hall*. The low, well-worn house was replaced in 1906 after fifty years of service. The school was closed for several years for lack of pupils. In 1927 it was improved with some modern equipment and reopened but the schoolhouse burned April 13, 1947. The district joined the Lexington Unit District in 1948.

#### LAWNDALE TOWNSHIP 25N-5E

Mr. John Cassedy, who was later elected to the State Legislature, represented this Township on the board of supervisors in its first session in 1858. Beautiful grass which covered slopes to the northeast and southwest suggested the name, *Lawndale*. The Henlines who came here in 1828 were first settlers and others followed, settling in three sections of timber land in the southwest corner. More than twenty years passed before any settlers ventured out on the prairies. During the Blackhawk War a stockaded fort was erected on Henline land about one hundred and ten rods north of the Evergreen Church on the west side of the present road. A whip saw and grist mill, operated by steam power, were built in 1853 on Henline Creek near the first schoolhouse.

Lawndale Methodist Church and its nearby cemetery were located one mile east of Lawndale School. The church had been organized at the school in 1860 and Evergreen Methodist Church was built in 1868. The German Lutheran Church, with a school and cemetery, was established at the present location near the center of Section 11. Colfax Community High School, organized in 1920, included the entire Township with the exception of about five sections in the northwest corner which were taken into Lexington High School District.

#### EVERGREEN SCHOOL (3) No. 219

About 1830 a log schoolhouse was built near Henline Creek on the south side of the road near the spring. Legend relates that some Indian children attended there, for they were still living in that neighborhood when the Henline Fort was built during the Blackhawk War in 1832. The log house, or houses, served the community for school and church purposes until 1856 when a frame house was built one-quarter mile west of the recent location. Shelton Smith served as first teacher in the frame building, which was moved a quarter mile east to the corner in 1868. This building was replaced by a new house in 1907. After remodeling the building was maintained in excellent condition. Because it was near Evergreen Church and Cemetery, it was known as *Evergreen School*. The district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### HAWTHORNE SCHOOL (5) No. 220

In 1866 Lawndale Township was laid out into six districts, consisting of six sections each, and District No. 5 was located in the center of the lower half of the Township. A frame building was erected at the southeast corner of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 28 which was used until 1878 when the Township was laid out in nine districts. A new site was then selected in the center of the district where a better structure with a basement was built on the southwest corner of Section 27. It has always been called *Hawthorne School* for George W. Hawthorne, a land owner of the community. The district merged with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### WILSON SCHOOL (6) No. 221

This district was laid out in 1866 and the next year a temporary frame building was placed on the southwest corner of Section 25 on land belonging to a man known as "Uncle Jiminy" Wilson. A new building erected in 1874 across to the southeast replaced the old one, but this house was replaced by a concrete building in 1907. When it was destroyed by fire in 1912, a new frame schoolhouse was erected. Well-equipped it has always been known

as *Wilson School*. This district became a part of the Colfax Unit in 1948. The building is being used for grades one to three.



HAWTHORNE SCHOOL, District No. 220. Vera Lobdell, teacher.

#### LIBERTY SCHOOL (7) No. 222

In 1871 territory taken from Maple and Wilson Districts was organized into this district and a house was built on the recent site north of the southeast corner of Section 14. It served the community until 1899 when the new house was erected. In early days it was known as McNab School because McNab Brothers owned four hundred acres of land north of the school. Later was known as *Liberty School* because it was organized at a time when interest in the Centennial Celebration of our Independence was high. Liberty School was maintained in excellent condition and well equipped, and joined the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (9) No. 223

For the last district in the Township to be organized, two sections were taken in 1878 from the district to the north and two from the district to the south, organizing them as District No. 9. At that time a neat frame building was erected at the southeast corner of Section 16. Because it was located in the center of the Township, it became known as *Center School*. One of the good community centers for many years, Center maintained an excellent, well-equipped school until the school consolidated with the Colfax Unit in 1948. The building will be used as Town Hall.

**LEONARD SCHOOL (8) No. 224**

Leonard School was included in Lawndale District until 1876 when this district No. 8 was organized and a house was built on the east side of the road forty rods from the south side of Section 18. The site was obtained from Patrick Leonard, owner of the land, and has since been known as the *Leonard School*. Remodeled to meet the needs of the community and state requirements, it has been an interesting school. The district was divided between the Lexington and Colfax Unit Districts in 1948.

**LAWNDALE SCHOOL (2 & 3) No. 225**

In 1858 the Township was divided into four districts with District No. 2, consisting of nine sections laid out in the northwest corner. On condition that a school be built within the year, a site was obtained in the center of the new district. A rough frame building was erected on the northeast corner of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 8 but in 1866 the Township was divided into six districts of six sections each. At that time the schoolhouse in Section 8 was moved one-half mile west and one-quarter mile north to the center of the new district. There it served what are now Lawndale and Leonard Districts until 1876, when the Lawndale School was built three-quarters of a mile farther north. Lawndale District had an unusual number of public spirited patrons who contributed much to the welfare of the district. Church and Sunday schools were conducted at the school for many years. After the house was burned in the night by an incendiary on May 16, 1880, the citizens voted to rebuild immediately the same size schoolhouse at a cost of \$691.10. The school has been well maintained through the years. It joined the Lexington District Unit in 1948.

**BUCKEYE SCHOOL (1, 2) No. 226**

Sections No. 1, 2, and 3 were organized as District No. 1 in 1860. A school was located in the northeast corner of the S.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 3. In 1862 the site was purchased on the condition that a good and sufficient school must be kept or the land reverts. In 1866 District No. 2 was organized, including this location. A new site was then obtained one mile west and a quarter south of the old school. Here, in the center of the district, Buckeye School was built in 1866. It has always been called *Buckeye*, possibly for some of the early settlers from Ohio. The schoolhouse has been remodeled to meet the state requirements, but they have always had much trouble to obtain a satisfactory supply of drinking water. Water from deeply drilled wells in this location has never been usable. The district was absorbed by the Colfax Unit in 1948.

## MAPLE SCHOOL (1) No. 227

In 1866 the west end of this district was cut off. Luckily the schoolhouse was located on the territory which was not detached, and it was moved to the northeast corner of Section 11. In 1871 a new school building was erected across to the north of the earlier location. An inscription on the front gable in German lettering reads: "Erected August 15, 1871 Bi Germanic Mff. Co." This school in the northeast corner of the Township amid level corn lands has been called *Maple*, because of many beautiful maple trees on the grounds. The school consolidated with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

## CROPSEY TOWNSHIP 25N-6E

Cropsey Township was organized in April, 1858. Named for Colonel A. J. Cropsey, who settled here in 1854, it included what is now Anchor Township until 1877. This Township is entirely prairie and as a consequence, had no early settlements. Belle Prairie, the northern half of the congressional township (25N-6E), is connected with this one in school affairs. An elevation, known as the Cropsey Ridge, crosses the Township from the northwest spreading out into well drained, undulating high land of rich black loam. The Henline Creek crosses from the east.

The Potosi postoffice and trading center was established in the early 1860s. The long distance to a grain market was a real hardship before the Illinois Central branch of the Railroad came through this section and the village of Cropsey was established. An effort to locate a station one mile to the northeast, named Rosalthe, failed when people refused to move to the new town. The Railroad Company had built a depot and laid out a side track there, but they were moved to the site of Cropsey when Rosalthe did not develop. Cropsey Township was fortunate in having many sturdy and progressive citizens, many of them interested in music and the social welfare of the community.

## CROPSEY SCHOOL (3, 5, 6) No. 302

Cropsey Township was laid out in school districts in 1859. District No. 3 included ten and one-half sections in McLean and three in Livingston County, an area only sparsely settled at the time. A neat frame schoolhouse was erected in 1860 on the northeast corner one mile west of the present village of Cropsey. The district was reorganized in 1867 as No. 5, with practically the same territory. When the Township was redistricted in 1868, District No. 6, in the northeast part comprising two and one-half sections in this County and two in Livingston, purchased the schoolhouse and moved it to the present school site which was then the center of the district. The

Potosi, Mann and Miller Districts were laid out at that time, largely from territory from the former District No. 5. The one-room school served the district until a few years after the village of Cropsey was platted in 1880. A two-room school was then built, which burned in 1910. The same year a third teacher had been employed for the high school work. The present four-room block building was erected in 1911 at a cost of \$6200. Two elementary and two high school teachers were employed in the new school which offered a three-year high school program. Several rural schools in this area consolidated with Cropsey in 1947, and were taken into the Fairbury Unit District No. 3.

#### CROPSEY COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL No. 399

With the organization of the Community High School in 1920, the high school was moved to the beautiful new building and grounds on the east side of the town. An accredited four-year high school has since been maintained here. They became a part of the Fairbury Unit in 1950.

#### MERRILL SCHOOL (4, 6, 9) No. 228

Laid out in 1867, this district consisted of six sections detached from Fairview District to the north and one-half section from what is now Anchor Township. The two east sections were detached in 1868 for the new District No. 8, and a few years later a schoolhouse was built about a quarter mile south of the recent site. In 1891 the house was moved to the northeast corner of Section 31, where it remained through the years. The schoolhouse has been kept in fair condition, with some good improvements made as they were needed. It was named *Merrill School* for Esbon M. Merrill, a wealthy land owner living just across to the northeast. The school was closed for some time and the few pupils were sent to Anchor. The district merged with the Anchor Consolidation in 1947 and with the Colfax Unit in 1948.

#### MANN SCHOOL (8) No. 229

In 1868 this district was platted with two sections from District No. 6, two from District No. 5, and a section and a half from what was later Anchor Township. In 1869 a neat frame house was erected on the southeast corner of the N.E.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 33. The school was known as *Mann School* for J. B. T. Mann who then owned a section of land south of the school. Mr. Mann, a brother of William Mann, was a nurseryman and produced thousands of Osage hedge plants for the farmers in Central Illinois. In 1921 this district consolidated with Anchor, but some were not satisfied because Anchor failed to provide transportation. A vote to withdraw failed in 1921, but was carried in 1931. The schoolhouse, still standing, was improved and remodeled

at a cost of \$2000. After about ten years with a small enrollment, the school was closed again and the pupils were sent to Anchor. The district consolidated with Anchor in 1947 and became a part of Colfax Unit District in 1948.

### POTOSI SCHOOL (5) No. 303

The Potosi District was organized in 1868 in its recent form, and a well-constructed frame house was erected at the northeast corner of Section 21 at a cost of about \$1500. The directors were censured for such extravagance because many flimsy houses had been erected in the past for as low as \$200. The school became the social center of the community. The Christians, or Campbellites as they were called, held meetings in the school for many years. Lyceums, spelling bees, and public meetings were other attractions. The Grange held its regular sessions there while the group functioned in that section. The house burned on February 11, 1920 after serving the district nearly fifty-two years. The new schoolhouse, then built, was modern with a basement and furnace. A later addition provided plumbing and toilets. The school was well equipped with good neighborhood support, but the social interest of earlier times was lacking. The once thriving village of Potosi, a half mile to the east, named by the post office department, gives us the name for the school. The district joined Cropsey Consolidation, which was absorbed by the Fairbury Unit.



FAIRVIEW SCHOOL, District No. 304, 1931. Helen Worrick, teacher.

## FAIRVIEW SCHOOL (4) No. 304

The first schoolhouse was built in 1858 just west of the present Fairview Church. After two or three years this house was burned and a new one was erected on the recent site at the northeast corner of Section 19. In 1873 this schoolhouse was replaced with a new one of good construction for that time. The ceiling was of 1x12 inch pine boards and later it was covered with laths and plaster. After fifty years service, the entire ceiling fell during the night, causing much damage to the furniture. In later years the school was remodeled; an addition added to the south for a kitchen and toilets, it was relined, and redecorated. The equipment was very complete. Religious and other meetings were held in the schoolhouse before the church was built. The name, *Freshcorn School*, was used for a time, in honor of G. W. Freshcorn who lived to the east. Later it took the name of the church and was called *Fairview School*. They had an excellent community club. The district consolidated with Cropsey, which joined the Fairbury Unit.

## GRIDLEY TOWNSHIP 26N-2 &amp; 3E

Gridley Township in the northwest corner is the largest in the County, really a township and a half. The larger part of its area is rather level with a black soil, unexcelled in fertility. It becomes more rolling in the southwest portion near the timber that cuts into three of the lower sections. The Township is drained by Buck Creek and several smaller branches of the Mackinaw River. There were a few settlers in the timber areas as early as 1835, but in 1850 many still doubted that the vast open prairies would ever be inhabited. The picture was changed by the coming of the Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad which gave the farmers a local market. In 1856 the village of Gridley was laid out at the highest point in the Township and named for Asahel Gridley who was the general agent for the Illinois Central Railroad lands from LaSalle to the southern boundary of McLean County. The Railroad Company had been awarded in 1850 all the even numbered sections not occupied in this area, and since settlements on the prairie had been slow, the company became owner of half the Township. With inside information, Mr. Gridley was able to capitalize on the new village site. It is interesting to note that the land of this Township was sold at from \$8 to \$18 per acre, depending upon the distance to market. If the agent made the sale he received 50c per acre.

The United States government surveyors made a survey and notes of this Township in October, 1833. This item is interesting: "On a rolling prairie on the west line of the S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 34, a large field laying on the east side of this line, except 150 links owned by Mr. Baholomus". This

was General Bartholomew who lived to the south at Clarksville. At that time few people had any means of breaking the tough prairie sod.

#### GRIDLEY SCHOOL (5) No. 239

In 1859 the first school in this village, built by subscription at a cost of \$105, was located on Third Street in the block west of the post office. Sixteen pupils attended the school taught by Charles Cochrane. In 1860 a one-room school was built by the district on Lot 10 in the block east of the high school. A few years later another room was added on the next lot east. The two rooms were moved to separate locations in the early 1880s, and a new two-story, four-room building was erected on the site. A high school course was offered, the first class graduating in 1892. In 1906 the beautiful brick building was erected. Four elementary teachers were then employed and the high school conducted a four-year program. The principal with some assistance from the grammar room teacher took care of the high school work, until requirements demanded two more teachers in 1935.

#### COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 410

In 1936 the Community High School District No. 410 was voted in, after two attempts to organize in 1920 had failed. The increased attendance with additional teachers soon overcrowded the building. The two School Boards met and showed excellent cooperation. The High School Board purchased and remodeled the building for extra courses, and a large gymnasium was also added. The new \$65,000 elementary school south of the high school was completed in 1941. The school spirit of this village would be a worthy example for any community. The citizens of the locality organized Community Consolidated District No. 474 in 1948, and voted \$190,000 to enlarge the elementary building in 1950.

#### PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL (1) No. 230

A log schoolhouse was built on the recent site on the north side of the Fort Clark trail road in the early 1840s. It was called *Log School*. There was a good spring of drinking water not too far to the east. The house was later repaired, improved, and well equipped for that time with better furniture. People from a distance referred to it as the *Coon Bridge School* for the Adam Coon family living near there, and the crossing at the Mackinaw River was called "Coon Ford". Later a bridge was built on piles was Coon Bridge. This early information was given by Mrs. Retta Dodson and A. W. Coon in an interview on January 12, 1923. Both had attended the old Log School and Retta had later taught there. It would have been interesting if the stories told by these former pupils could have been recorded.

The present building replaced the old landmark and was then called *Willard School* for Elias Willard who lived near. As the timber was being cleared away, the name it now carries was suggested, for it was becoming a pleasant view. The neighborhood remains an interesting one but the school and its equipment were not kept up with the times. The district consolidated with the El Paso Unit in 1948.

#### PRAIRIE COLLEGE (6) No. 231

After the district was organized in 1862, a house was built north of the center of Section 23. When the new house was completed someone as a joke called it, *Prairie College*, and the name has persisted through the years. Church services were held there for some time, and later a Methodist Church was built across the road to the southeast. In 1912 a new schoolhouse was erected. With very large enrollments in the early days, this has been an interesting and excellent school and community center. The school merged with the El Paso Unit in 1948.

#### FISHBURN SCHOOL (3) No. 232

On June 29, 1857 the voters met at the home of Mr. A. Thurston to select a school site and to determine an amount sufficient to build and furnish a schoolhouse. Jacob Fishburn, the father of Dr. Fishburn of El Paso, offered the site at the northwest corner of Section 14, gratis. \$420 was the amount agreed upon, which was to be raised by taxation and paid in five equal payments. The schoolhouse furnished with handmade benches and a table was completed in December by the builder, Wesley Pierce. School began at once, the summer term being taught by Lucinda D. Nay. This first school served a large territory, for the district in 1862 included six sections, but in 1867 Sections No. 2 and 3 were cut off. In 1875 the badly dilapidated house was sold to Timothy Enright for \$43. Sunday schools had been held there, often with prairie flowers for decoration. The recent house was built by C. M. Clute in 1875 at a cost of \$1050, repaired in 1899, and made standard in 1913. Later the windows and the chimney were changed to meet the requirements of the Sanitation Law. After the district joined the El Paso Unit District, a farewell homecoming was held at the school on June 6, 1948. This event was attended by more than four hundred.

#### GRAND VIEW SCHOOL (7) No. 234

Although the district was laid out in 1862, the present building was erected in 1873 at the southeast corner of Section 1 and was known as No. 7 for sometime. However the neatly, painted house on the level prairie suggested the name, *Grand View*. Prior to 1873 there was a large corral on the school site where the cattle of the community were collected. During

the day a boy herded them on the prairie, dipped water for them from a curbed well to the north, and returned them to the corral in the evening. A small frame house was built in 1862, one-half mile to the south, and called *Stokes School* for B. Stokes who lived near. From this interesting school and community center many students have gone forth to worthwhile achievement. Due to alert and cooperative directors the house has been modernized and well equipped and this was the first school in Gridley Township to meet the Standard Requirements (1911). They have had many excellent teachers, Agnes O'Malley who began there in 1921 and remained until 1945, deserves special mention. The enrollments have been more than those of the average school, but the school has recently been closed and the pupils are being transported to Gridley. A big homecoming was held in 1948.



GRANDVIEW SCHOOL, District No. 234. Agnes O'Malley, teacher, 1921-1945.

#### GREGORY SCHOOL (2) No. 235

A schoolhouse was built near the west side of Section 32 in the late 1850s. Located south of the Fort Clark road, this building burned in 1879, was rebuilt and burned again in 1893. The new site on the Fort Clark road near the center of Section 32 northwest of the Buck Creek Church was

donated by John Gregory Sr. The school constructed there in 1894 was standardized in 1911. In early times pupils from this district attended the Coon Bridge School or the Log School at Clarksville. The district became a part of the Gridley Consolidation in 1948.

#### BUCK CREEK SCHOOL (1) No. 236

A frame building on boulders, located in the late 1850s in the southwest corner of the northeast forty acres of Section 34 south of the bend of Buck Creek, was the first school in East Gridley. The Log School at Clarksville was then abandoned and pupils from that timbered section came out to this school on the prairie. In the next few years for some reason the timber pupils and the prairie children had many clashes, until the timber group was withdrawn when the Olive Branch District was organized in 1877. In 1888 the recent site one-half mile northwest on the west side of the road was selected as being more nearly the center of the district. Here a new schoolhouse was built.

For the early school, water was obtained at Stretch Spring on the creek east of the school, and later at Gilmore Spring on a west branch of the creek. Difficulty was experienced in obtaining water at the new site. After a well was drilled two hundred and ten feet down at a cost of \$500, the water was not fit to use and trips were made to the old spring. A vote was then taken to move the school near a spring in the Davis pasture. Failing to obtain the permission to move they put down another well twenty-eight feet with satisfactory results. The water question was settled!

The school was standardized in 1912, remodeled and modernized in 1929. It was one of the best equipped rural schools in the County. The district was divided between Gridley Consolidated District and the Lexington Unit in 1948. The building was purchased by Bill Klein and redecorated for future homecomings.

#### FREED SCHOOL (4) No. 237

When the district was organized in the early 1860s, a house was built on the open prairie on the northeast corner of Section 21. The schoolhouse was moved in 1878 to a site on the west side two miles south of Gridley. It was made standard in 1914. A new brick veneer building erected in 1915 was the first modern rural school building in Gridley Township. It was named for the Freed Family who lived in this neighborhood. The district consolidated with Gridley and the house and grounds were sold to the Gridley Legion to be used as a recreation center.



FREED SCHOOL, new in 1915. John Anderson, teacher.

#### FOUR CORNERS SCHOOL (6) No. 238

This district was organized in 1868 from Districts No. 4, now 237, and No. 7, now 234. A schoolhouse was built on the northeast corner of the N.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 19. In 1925 a new modern building was erected there at a cost of \$5000, because it was located at a crossroads it was called *Four Corners School*. This district merged with Gridley in 1948.

#### PRAIRIE VALLEY SCHOOL (3) No. 240

After this district was organized in the early 1860s, a frame building was erected on the south side a half mile west of the recent location. The schoolhouse was moved in 1883 to the site at the southwest corner of Section 1, and has been remodeled and kept in excellent condition. For sometime it was called *Yergler School* for Jacob Yergler who lived across to the southwest, but later the location which was low and level suggested the name *Prairie Valley*. The district had lost only eighty acres of its original six and one-half sections when it was absorbed by the Gridley Consolidation in 1948.

#### CHENOA TOWNSHIP 26N-4E

Chenoa Township on the northern border of McLean County is all rolling prairie with no timber areas. Though there is no large stream running through the Township, the rich soil drains well. Coming late here as they

did in other open prairie sections, the Township's settlements and agricultural development began in 1856. The building of the Chicago and Alton Railroad in 1854 and later the crossing of the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad laid the foundation for the rapidly growing village of Chenoa. The railroads assured available markets and elevators necessary for a prosperous and happy agricultural community.

#### CHENOA SCHOOLS (1) No. 249

Chenoa District comprising six sections was organized about 1858, but the two west sections were detached in 1867 for Bauman District. The first settlement in the new village of Peoria Junction was made in 1854. When the town was platted in 1856, it was named Chenoa, an Indian word meaning a white dove. In 1856 a subscription school of one hundred and eighteen pupils was taught by Miss Mary A. Clapp in a building on Lot 6, Block 3 of Scott's First Addition and the next year a man and his wife conducted a similar school in a hall. Judge Sample and Martin Shephard were the first teachers in the district's two-room frame school built in 1858. The new building erected on the present site in 1866 at a cost of \$26,000 housed an enrollment of two hundred and seventy-five under the first superintendent, W. J. Glover. John A. Miller became superintendent in 1873 and remained in that position until 1881 when he was appointed County Superintendent of Schools of McLean County. The new schoolhouse was sixty-six feet square, three stories high, with a basement, and a belfry with a cupola. There were two large classrooms on each of the first two floors with a large room and two small ones on the third floor. Two more rooms were added in 1884, and six teachers were employed.

The first class graduated from the high school in 1881. At the time of the first class electives were offered in the high school, including astronomy, mental and moral philosophy, Latin, Greek, and French. The textbooks used in 1878 were: *Independent Readers*, Monteith's *Geography*, White's *Arithmetic*, Ray's *Algebra*, Greenleaf's *Geometry*, Tenney's *Natural History*, Brown's *Physiology*, Cooley's *Philosophy*, Steel's *Geology*, Gray's *Botany*, Kiddle's *Astronomy*, and Scott's *United States History*.

The present modern brick building was erected in 1911 at a cost of \$40,000. After the Chenoa Community High School was organized in February 1920, the school again became overcrowded. A temporary building was placed on a lot to the east in 1932 for the use of the Commerce Department, and another building northwest of the park had previously been fitted up for physical education. It also served as a place for community meetings. The basement of a church across to the west was used for band instruction.

**COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 390**

In 1937 the Community High School District voted to build and to issue bonds at 6% for \$65,000. With the income from the bonds, cash on hand, and a government grant of \$63,000, the new building was completed at a cost of \$167,000, and the high school in its new location is the pride of the community.

The elementary school with increased enrollment and expanded program fully occupies the old building. It received the Superior Rating from the state office. Ten rural schools in McLean and several in Livingston County joined Chenoa in January, 1949 to form Community Unit District No. 9.

**PAYNE SCHOOL (5) No. 241**

After the district was organized in 1866, the recent house was built in 1867 on the north side of Section 31 on a site donated by Dr. Seldon M. Payne. Always kept in excellent condition, this building was remodeled in 1919 to meet the requirements of the Sanitation Law. Known to many as *Payne College*, it has been an interesting, well equipped school. The district joined the Lexington Unit in 1948.

**BALLARD SCHOOL (3) No. 242**

A well constructed schoolhouse was built in 1865 on the northwest corner about a mile west of the recent site. For many years a group of Methodists held church services there. In 1867 the district lost Sections 19 and 20 to the new Enterprise District, but in 1883 two half sections were added on the east from Trimmer District. In a short time the school was moved to the recent location west of the road near the southeast corner of Section 28 which was the center of the district. Without delay the Methodists erected a church on the former school site calling it Olivet Chapel. However this church was soon abandoned, sold, and converted into a farm residence. Made standard in 1912, the school has since been remodeled and fairly well equipped. Of recent years it has been modernized with a deep well and a garage for the teacher's car. The district was divided between Lexington and Chenoa Unit Districts in 1948. Ballard Station nearby suggested the name *Ballard School*.

**TRIMMER SCHOOL (4) No. 243**

This district consisting of six sections was organized in 1866. The school site was on the land of N. Trimmer a half mile west of the recent location, so it has been called *Trimmer School* through the years. After sometime two sections were detached from the west side and the school was moved in 1884 to the center of the district at the southeast corner of Section 26. The Salem Methodists held Sunday school and church in the schoolhouse for

many years before they built a church in the southeast corner of the district. The school building has been remodeled, modernized, and kept in good condition. The equipment is very good, but the enrollment has been falling off as it has in many other rural schools. The district was absorbed by the Chenoa Unit in 1949.

#### MAPLE TREE SCHOOL (7) No. 245

When this district was organized as No. 7 in 1866, the recent site two miles south of Chenoa was selected and a neat frame building was erected in 1867. For sometime it was known as *No. 7 School*. As the years passed, some good citizen took time to plant a small tree on the school grounds. Playful boys and girls did not harm it and in a short time it was a growing sapling, adorning the landscape. Someone exclaimed, "This is the *Maple Tree School!*" and the name lingered. The many sturdy families of this district are responsible for the interesting and well kept school. Of recent times the enrollment has been small. The district was included in the Chenoa Unit in 1949.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (6) No. 245

Although, Center District, No. 6, was laid out in 1866, it was not until 1871 that the school was built on the southeast corner of Section 16. In a few years the directors aware of the need for more playground purchased another acre just west of the school. It was only natural to call this Center School and McLean County had eight more schools which earned the same



ENTERPRISE SCHOOL, District No. 246, 1931. Ella Ruth Egle, teacher.

title under similar conditions. Standardized in 1913, this schoolhouse has been kept up in a very worthy manner. It became a part of the Chenoa Unit in 1949.

#### ENTERPRISE SCHOOL (8) No. 246

This district was organized in 1867 and a substantial frame building was erected at the northeast corner of Section 19. The two north sections were detached from Meadows District and the two south sections from Ballard District extending to the west at that time. Many land owners have donated school sites, but those in this district, evidently, did not feel that the school was necessary. Twenty-five dollars would have been a fair price, but two hundred was the amount paid for the two acres, making it a real *Enterprise*. The first school in the Township to be improved and standardized, it was well maintained, modern, and well equipped for a rural school. The building burned on December 7, 1947, and the district later divided between the Lexington and Chenoa Unit Districts.

#### MEADOWS SCHOOL (2) No. 247

District No. 2, as organized in 1866, included eight sections in the north-western part of the Township. Since the flag station on the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad was known as Meadows Switch, a frame schoolhouse located a mile and a quarter east of the station was called *Meadows School*. At that time the school had no desks, only benches for the fifty-five pupils who crowded the room. The school directors were C. H. Willburger, Joel Hicks, and Will Ballinger. In 1868 the schoolhouse was moved three-quarters of a mile west to a site of one and one-half acres donated by Mr. Willburger and was known as the *Willburger School*. Mennonites began Sunday school in the schoolhouse in 1874 and later organized a church.

Although the village of Meadows was platted in 1877, it showed no real growth in population until after 1893 when the Meadows factory of corn elevators began to expand. The Meadows Manufacturing company later moved to Pontiac, then to Bloomington, but at that time homes were built in Meadows for the factory workmen. In 1909 the school became crowded and the present two room concrete block building was erected. Two teachers were employed until 1940 in the modern, well-equipped schoolhouse. After that, because of the greatly reduced enrollment, only one teacher was employed, and later the district merged with the Chenoa Unit. The name of a family owning land near the school and station suggested the name, *Meadows*, and not the beautiful, level, prairie land. Grades one to six are now taught there.



BAUMAN SCHOOL, District No. 247, 1917, Wanda Neher, teacher; County Superintendent of Schools B. C. Moore, visiting.

#### BAUMAN SCHOOL (9) No. 248

Platted in 1868 from territory detached from Meadows and Chenoa Districts, this district was numbered 9 for it was the last in the Township to organize. The site at the northeast corner of Section 9 two miles west of Chenoa was donated by Joel Hicks and called *Hicks School*, but the name was changed when Bauman brothers later owned the Hicks farm. The school was kept in good condition and improved by the addition of a kitchen and indoor toilets. Its many sturdy citizens made this a very good community center. The district was included in the Chenoa Unit District.

#### YATES TOWNSHIP 26N-5E

Chenoa Township was divided in 1863 forming a new township in the northeast corner of the County, which was named Union. It was discovered that another township in the state had that name, so the Township was then named Yates for the governor. Since there was no timber in this area, it was not subject to early settlement, but after 1856 there was a general rush for the farms in this section of the County. The contour of the land is rather flat, although most of it is rolling enough for drainage. The soil is very fertile. Rooks Creek and its branches cross the Township and a drainage system of recent years has deepened some of the waterways. In 1863 three

hundred twenty-three acres of the 16th section were sold at \$6.82 per acre, ninety-eight acres were sold in 1876 at \$25 per acre, and two hundred and forty acres of this school section remained unsold. The large Township School Fund, thus provided, is a real aid to its school districts.

The village of Weston was platted in 1866, when a side track at a water tank two miles east was moved to this location. This town afforded an excellent grain market and trading center for the farm community, but like many another small village, Weston has been on the decline for some time. For many years the citizens of this Township conducted a "Community Fair" which was a credit to the management and of real interest to surrounding areas.

#### WESTON SCHOOL (6. 2) No. 257

In 1868 three sections were detached from the north end of Center District, including the newly platted village of Weston, and organized as District No. 6. A one-room school was located in Lot 20 west of the park. (Lots 17, 18, 19 and 20 have since been turned back into farm land.) The enrollment of this school reached more than fifty. A new site was selected in 1881 where the present two-room school was then erected.

For the next forty years the directors were generally fortunate in obtaining two very good teachers for each succeeding term, and new equipment was added as needed to meet the growing demands of an age of school improvement. In 1922 the School Board decided to put in a high school course of one year and since this was non-high territory all the expenses would be paid by the non-high district. This plan appeared to be a convenience for the local young people, so a third teacher was employed and a group of students showed up the first day. Unfortunately, the teacher failed to interest and hold the students, and in a few weeks the project was abandoned. With the falling off of enrollment by 1923, only one elementary classroom was used and they have continued as a one-teacher school.

Often the enrollment of the school was rather large for a single teacher, yet some of the interested and better trained ones did excellent work in the classroom and were of real value to the social welfare of the community. The directors continue to improve the building and grounds with new equipment and necessary repairs. Again with attendance increasing each year, it was decided in 1945 to go back to the two-teacher system. The district joined the Chenoa Unit in 1949. Grades one to six are now taught there.

## GRAYS SCHOOL (9) No. 250

In 1864 a school was erected a half mile east of the present location on the south side. District No. 4 included ten sections at that time. Prior to the organization of nearby districts the school began to be overcrowded, so four section were detached on the east side in 1868 for Cottonwood School and two sections in 1870 for Ogle School. Moved to the present site at the southeast corner of Section 30 in 1873, the schoolhouse was called *Grays School* for many years, for John Gray who owned the farm on which it stood. The house burned in February, 1913 and the present one was built. The schoolhouse was remodeled in 1918 and has been modernized since then. Although, the enrollment has been small of recent years, the directors have provided good teachers and all the needed equipment. The district merged with Chenoa in 1949.

## COTTONWOOD SCHOOL (7, 8) No. 251

District No. 7 was organized in 1868 by detaching four sections from District No. 4 to the west. A building was completed and school opened on December 1st with Mrs. Eames as the teacher. She had six children of her own and resided in the district. Cottonwood twigs were set around the farm on this corner and those on the school site at the southeast corner of Section 28 were allowed to remain to become large trees. Thus the name, Cottonwood School originated and it has held through the years. W. D. Castle moved here in 1867 when there were no roads or bridges between this place and Chenoa. He attended the school until he was twenty-three. Often there were as many as fifty pupils enrolled in the school. The house was remodeled in 1917. In 1939 the school closed having only three pupils. The building had been recently repaired and the school fully recognized. The district became a part of the Chenoa Unit.

## BEULAH SCHOOL (7) No. 252

District No. 5 was organized in 1866, consisting of eight sections, and a school was built on the north side of the road a mile north and a half mile east of the recent site. The ground in the center of the district was too low to furnish a good place to build. Pupils from the north had much difficulty in reaching this school, which was called *Liberty*. Because of bad roads and high water, in 1871 the district was divided and a building was erected on the present site at the southeast corner of Section 26. It was now numbered 7 and for many years called *No. 7 School*, but later called *Beulah* for the church which stood across the road to the east. Ira Miller, a brother of County Superintendent John A. Miller was the first teacher in the new school. The schoolhouse was standardized in 1913, but became dilapidated and was

repaired and modernized in 1937. Before Beulah Church was built, meetings were held in the schoolhouse. In 1950 this district joined the Fairbury Unit District No. 3.



GARBER SCHOOL, District No. 253, 1935. The "pioneers". Christine Goold, teacher.

#### GARBER SCHOOL (6) No. 253

When District No. 5 was divided in 1871, the north four sections were organized as District No. 6 and the house was built on the recent site in the northeast corner of Section 23. For some time the school was known as *Old No. 6*, but of recent years it has been called *Garber School* for Peter Garber who lived west of the school. In the modern and well-equipped schoolhouse, the district has had an excellent school and a fine community center. They became a part of the Fairbury Unit in 1950.

#### CENTER SCHOOL (2, 5) No. 254

In 1863 this district, consisting of eight sections, located a small frame house at the southwest corner to the north of the recent location and then the center of the district. In 1868 three sections were detached for the new Weston District and No. 5 was assigned to this district. The later site on the east side eighty rods north of the center of the Township was leased in 1876, where a well-constructed house was erected. This house was remodeled to meet state requirements and made standard in 1913. It was being fairly

well maintained with an interesting school and community activities, when it burned on December 20, 1928, just as they were almost ready for the Christmas entertainment. The new, modern school, one of the best rural school buildings in the County, was ready for the next fall term. The school has been supported by a community with some very substantial and progressive patrons. In 1939 the school was given the Superior Rating. It merged with the Chenoa Unit. The building is now used for grades one to six.



CENTER SCHOOL, District No. 254, 1930. Leola Ploense, teacher.

#### OGLE SCHOOL (8, 4) No. 255

District No. 8 was platted in 1870, and the recent house was built in 1872 at the northeast corner of Section 19. The same year David Ogle, a Scotchman by birth who had become wealthy and had no family, decided to give to the community where he made his fortune, so when the school was being erected he set aside a fund for the schools of Yates Township. It was very appropriate to name the school for such a worthy citizen. A good school was maintained, with many neighborhood interests and meetings. The school was made standard in 1917, and some years later an addition was built on the west side for toilets and a garage for the teacher's car. Enrollment began to decline, so it was decided to close the school and to transport the children, three pupils that year, to other schools. This district was included in the Chenoa Unit.

## BRADY SCHOOL (3) No. 256

The recent schoolhouse was built in 1864 three-quarters of a mile south of the recent site on the west side of the road south of the creek, near the center of the district. Two sections were detached in 1870 for Ogle District and the recent site was obtained in 1873, so the building was moved north to the southeast corner of Section 6. James Brady, a member of the first Board of Directors, was active in getting the school district started, so it has always been called *Brady School*. Often enrollments were very large and although the building is small, it is comfortable. The school is rather poorly equipped and is showing the results of years of usage, but it has had an interesting role in the training of boys and girls for more than eighty years. It is a good example of the small building erected in early days. The district joined the Chenoa Unit in 1949.

## NUMBER ONE SCHOOL (1) No. 258

This district was organized as District No. 1 in 1866. Instead of being assigned the highest consecutive number in the County, it could have kept No. 1, had it been in the opposite corner of the County when the County Superintendent renumbered the districts. The present house, built in 1869, has been maintained in good condition. After being remodeled in 1918, the school was later made standard. With a cooperative community the school has had excellent support, with many social activities for the district. Many very good teachers have served at this school. Ferne Orendorff has a record of service from 1928 to 1940. The district joined the Fairbury Unit in 1950.



## School Officials McLean County

### SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

William Durley	1831-1834
Jesse W. Fell	1834-1836
Cheney Thomas	1836-1841
William H. Hodge	March-December 1841
James B. Price	1841-1849
John M. Scott	1849-1852
C. P. Merriman	1852-1857
Daniel Wilkins	1857-1867

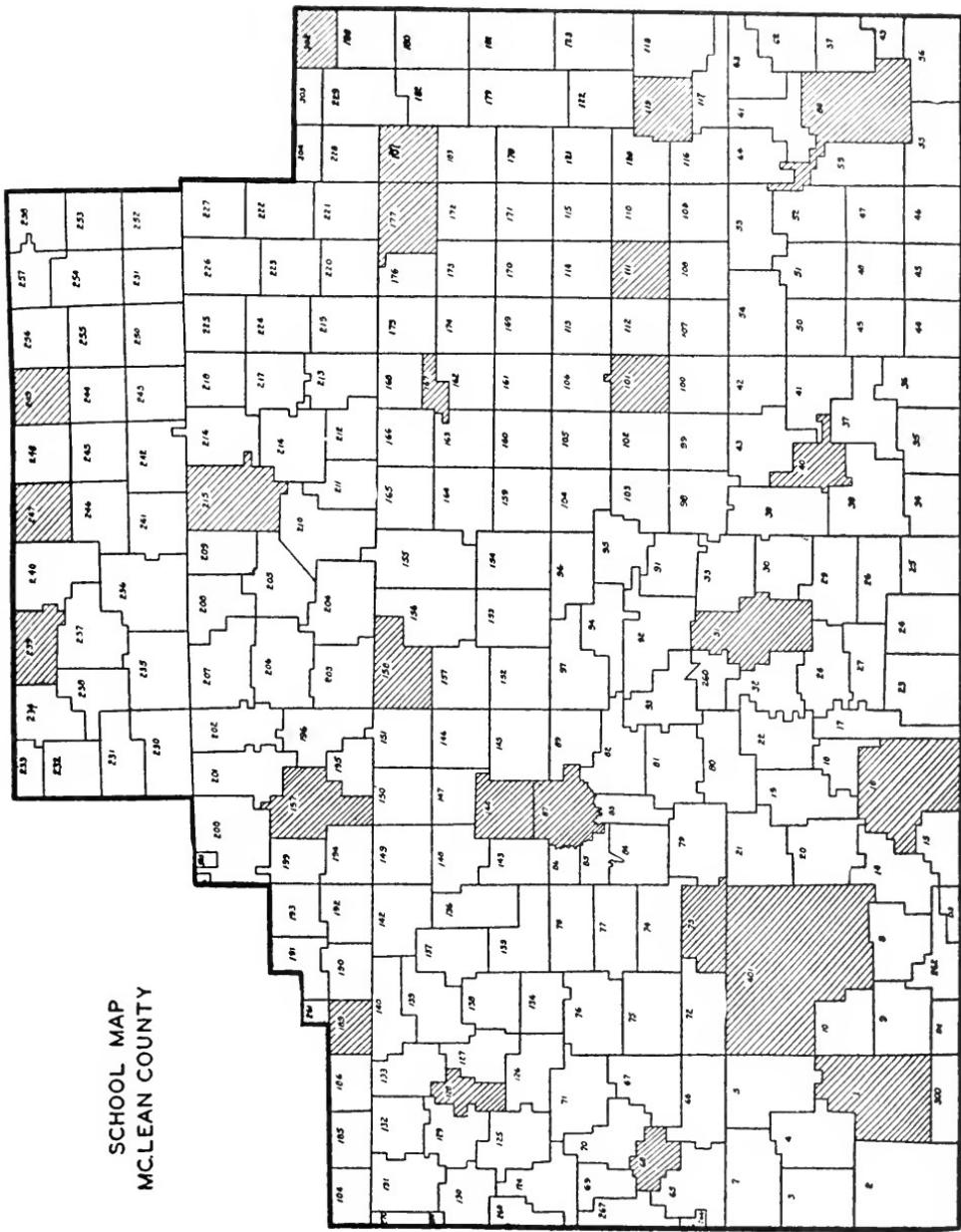
### COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

Daniel Wilkins *	1867-1869
John Hull	1869-1875
William Hawley Smith	1875-1881
John A. Miller	1881-1894
John S. Wren	1894-1906
B. C. Moore	1906-1923
Nettie B. Dement	1923-1927
William B. Brigham	1927-1943
Ralph F. Arends	1943-

Note: Daniel Wilkins reported September 1865, as School Commissioner. He reported in September 1867, as County Superintendent of Schools.



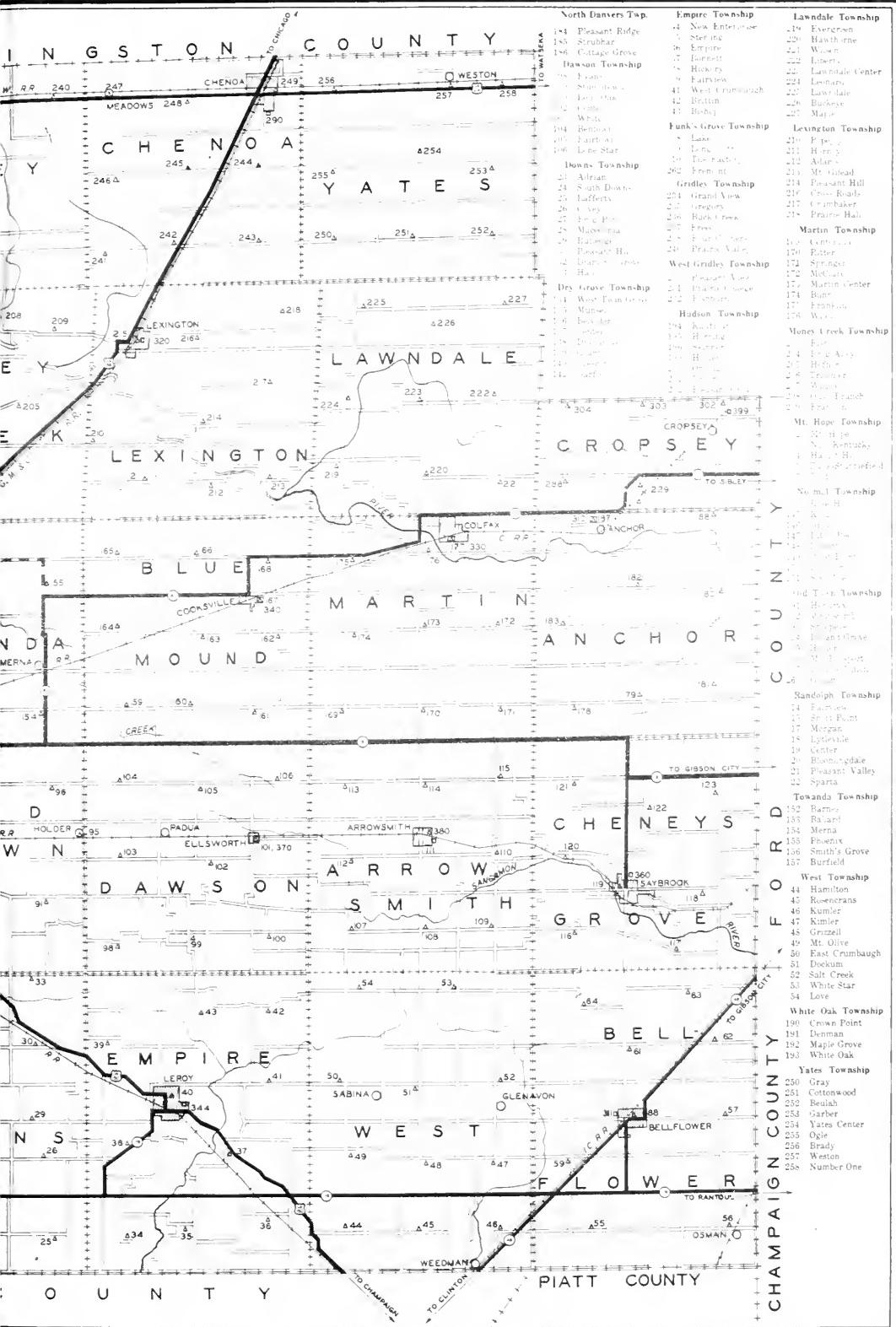
SCHOOL MAP  
MCLEAN COUNTY











UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

379 7738765 C003  
THE STORY OF MCLEAN COUNTY AND ITS SCHOOLS



3 0112 025306942